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Security Council

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Wednesday, 17 July 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. DiCarlo	(United States of America)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	France	Mr. Araud
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Sahebzada Ahmed Khan
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Kim Sook
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	Togo	Mr. Kadangha-Bariki
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant

Agenda

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

Protection of journalists

Letter dated 3 July 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/393)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

Protection of journalists

Letter dated 3 July 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/393)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Austria, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Greece, India, Israel, Japan, Lithuania, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Qatar, Senegal, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ukraine and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Kathleen Carroll, Mr. Mustafa Haji Abdinur, Mr. Richard Engel and Mr. Ghaith Abdul-Ahad.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/393, which contains a letter dated 3 July 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson, to whom I now give the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I thank you, Madam President, for convening this important and timely debate. I also wish to commend you, Madam, for inviting prominent and field-experienced representatives from the world of journalism to the Security Council today.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right guaranteed in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It constitutes an essential pillar of any vital society. It depends on and is nurtured by independent and pluralistic media — the lifeblood of democratic and informed discourse and debate.

In the past decade, more than 600 journalists have been killed while exercising their critical role in service to society. Just 10 days ago, Somali television journalist Liban Abdullah Farah was shot dead on his way home. His murder drew widespread condemnation. Liban's assassination is not an isolated case. Today's debate is devoted to the protection of civilians with a special focus on the protection of journalists in armed conflict.

But let us not forget that journalists also are at grave risk in many non-conflict situations around the world. In situations of armed conflict, however, these critical representatives of the fourth estate are particularly vulnerable. Last year in Syria, 41 journalists, including those who use social media, were killed. In Iraq and Afghanistan, 108 journalists have been killed since 2006. The majority of the victims are local journalists and media staff. In many cases, murdered journalists are covering corruption and other illegal activities. In most cases, journalists receive threats prior to being assassinated.

Attacks on journalists also take the forms of abduction, hostage-taking, harassment, intimidation and illegal arrest. Women journalists are increasingly becoming victims of sexual harassment and rape.

Let us remember that every time a journalist is killed by extremists, drug cartels or even Government forces, there is one voice less to speak on behalf of the victims of conflict, crime and human rights abuses. Every journalist murdered or intimidated into silence is one less observer of efforts to uphold rights and ensure human dignity. The least we can do when a journalist is murdered is to ensure that the death is investigated swiftly and that justice is served. It is shocking indeed, and unacceptable, that more than 90 per cent of the assassinations of journalists go unpunished.

The United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity was launched to create a free and safe environment for the media in conflict and non-conflict situations. It was approved

in April 2012 by the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination, with UNESCO in the lead. The basic rationale is that protecting free media is a prerequisite for freedom of expression and democracy. It is also relevant to the pursuit of peace and security, as well as development.

It should be noted that ensuring freedom of expression and access to independent media and information was highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. These values and principles are essential if we are to ensure the rule of law and effective institutions. Well-functioning and honest institutions are fundamental to development and prosperity.

The first phase of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists includes implementation in selected countries, but let me emphasize that the need is equally great in many other countries. The Plan of Action is based on a multidimensional, multi-actor approach. It relies on participation and support from Governments, particularly through Ministries of Information, as well as from local media, civil society and academia. All United Nations entities are also encouraged in the Plan of Action to submit information that contributes towards greater safety for journalists and media staff.

The Security Council, too, can play an important role by reacting to and standing up against suppression of media freedom wherever and whenever it occurs. When journalists are killed, information about threats to international peace and security is often buried. When addressing situations on its agenda, the Council may therefore wish to particularly consider the targeting of journalists and other threats to freedom of expression.

Let me end by quoting the Secretary-General on this year's World Press Freedom Day in May. He said, "All journalists, across all media, need to be able to do their jobs. When it is safe to speak, the whole world benefits."

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Ms. Carroll.

Ms. Carroll: I thank you, Madam, for the opportunity to talk about an important subject — the right of journalists around the world to work without threat or peril.

Everyone who walks into the main newsroom at the global headquarters of the Associated Press (AP) here in New York passes our Wall of Honor, a softly lit display of photographs and biographies of the 31 AP journalists who have died on assignment since the organization was founded 167 years ago. I pass it every morning, frequently pausing to look at the faces of the five men killed on my watch as editor: Nazeh Darwazeh, killed on 19 April 2003 while filming a confrontation between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians in the West Bank city of Nablus; Saleh Ibrahim, shot to death on 23 April 2005 as he arrived to cover an explosion in the Iraqi city of Mosul; Aswam Aamed Lutfallah, shot to death by insurgents as he filmed their gunfight with police in Mosul on 12 December 2006; Ahmed Hadi Naji, who left home astride his red-and-white motorbike on the way to the AP Baghdad office and disappeared — his body was found in a morgue six days later, on 5 January 2007; he had been shot in the back of the head; and Anthony Mitchell, headed home to Kenya from a West Africa reporting trip when the plane he was on crashed in Cameroon on 5 May 2007, killing all aboard.

Like those five men, most of the 31 people on our Wall died covering conflict, beginning with the 1876 Battle of the Little Big Horn in the United States. They fell during the Spanish-American war in Cuba, the Russo-Japanese War, the Korean conflict and the Second World War, which claimed five AP journalists. Another five died in Vietnam.

Many were shot to death — in an ambush, a riot or at a checkpoint; captured, tortured and shot by the Nazis. Two were attacked by mobs during civil unrest. Others were mortally wounded by mortars or shells. One went down on a warship, another on a refugee ship. Others were lost in plane crashes or one of many helicopter crashes, including the 1993 crash in Afghanistan that took the life of the only woman on the Wall of Honor, my friend Sharon Herbaugh.

We bring visitors to the Wall of Honor and it is important to explain why this is such a special place to us. These people are part of our professional family. They are in my head and heart each time we send AP journalists off into the world's many treacherous spots.

But more often, journalists are not heading off to an assignment in a treacherous spot. That dangerous assignment is the country they call home, and the threat is not from war. Indeed, most journalists who die

today are not caught in some wartime cross-fire; they are murdered just because of what they do. And those murders are rarely ever solved; the killers rarely ever punished.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) documents the attacks on journalists each year, and its annual accounting is grim indeed. More than 30 journalists are murdered every year, and many are abducted and tortured first. In the overwhelming number of cases — 90 per cent — the killers go unpunished, free to attack and kill again. CPJ has found that most murdered journalists — 5 in 6 — are killed in their own hometowns covering local stories concerning crime and corruption. They are attacked by people who know their work, and often know them personally. The journalists are menaced, arrested, beaten again and again; their families or colleagues threatened.

The attacks frequently escalate and some journalists flee their homeland for an exile's life. Others are jailed, sometimes for years. Some disappear off the face of the Earth. Many — too many — turn up dead: 12 in Somalia last year alone, five in Pakistan, four in Brazil, three in Syria, others in Russia, Nigeria, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Thailand, Ecuador, India and the Philippines.

So why should the world's leaders care about threats against journalists? Many officials the world over complain that journalists are headstrong and nosy. They ask questions, they write stories and take pictures that do not always sit well with the powerful people they cover. They aim their cameras at things some people do not want the world to see. Yet journalists represent the ordinary citizen. They ask questions on behalf of those people. They go to places the people cannot go to, and they bear witness. An attack on a journalist is a proxy for an attack on the ordinary citizen — an attack on that citizen's right to know information about their communities and their institutions.

It is true that, today, a journalist's tools are readily available to those average citizens. They have smart phones, cameras and satellite transmissions, and many make important contributions to news coverage. Indeed, authenticated images and reports from deep inside Syria — some by average citizens, some by partisans — have contributed to the world's understanding of the fighting in that country in the past two years. Their work enriches what we learn about the world every day; yet, the threat to them can be just as great as the threat to professional journalists. Who will protect them? And, closest to our hearts here, who will protect the reporters and photographers and editors and radio commentators and television hosts — the men and women who swallow fear every day, who constantly calculate the risks of simply doing their jobs, wondering if the next breath will be their last?

The safety of journalists is not a political topic or a professional rallying cry for me, it is deeply personal. The journalists we have lost all left families behind, often with young children who grow up with only the faintest memory of a parent who will never come home. As much as I want to, I know that I cannot personally protect all the AP journalists at work in every corner of the globe. But, every day, I try to do it anyway — because there are 31 photos on the AP Wall of Honor, and 31 pictures is enough.

The President: I thank Ms. Carroll for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Abdinur.

Mr. Abdinur: My name is Mustafa Haji Abdinur. For the past seven years, I have been a reporter for AFP in Somalia. Like so many others in my profession, on the dusty streets of Mogadishu they call me a dead man walking. Day after day, I tell stories to the world of the people of Somalia, the troubles they face and their hopes for the future. But today I sit here having carried with me the stories of my comrades and colleagues, my fellow journalists who paid the ultimate price for reporting from those same streets.

I speak from experience as a journalist in Somalia, but I also want to speak for all the journalists in Syria, Brazil, Egypt, Pakistan and many other countries, great and small, who have been killed, are missing or have been harrassed over the years.

My story is not unique. I am here today simply because I am lucky and because the gunmen that have killed so many of colleagues — my friends — have not yet found me. As a journalist, it is just a waiting game. It is not a question of if, but of when. You report the news, but in Somalia, all too often, it is the reporters themselves who become the story. If we come back home alive, we cherish that extra day with our wives and children, and hope that luck remains for the next day too.

Somalia's civil war began more than two decades ago. Since then, nearly 60 journalists have been killed covering one of the world's worst and longest-running

humanitarian crises. Last year, 18 were killed. So far this year, four have died.

Journalists face threats from all sides: there is no single enemy. How safe is it to speak when a security official can throw a journalist into prison simply because he is not pleased with a story? How safe is it to speak when a young boy armed with a pistol can walk along your path and shoot you? There is no ordinary route to work, you must change where you walk each day. You wait for your turn to come, because the gunmen are out there waiting for you.

My fellow journalists who have been killed all knew the risks. They have paid the price because they wanted to tell the story. They have paid the price for telling the truth.

When I pick up my cell phone I feel sad, because their contacts are saved there, as though I could still dial their number and speak to them. I do not delete their names just because their lives have been ended by the killers. Instead, I wait for the day when justice will be served and the guilty punished for shooting the messenger. Sometimes, the authorities do make a few arrests. However, rarely do they result in conviction and punishment. The perpetrators of these grim crimes remain free to kill again with impunity.

In such a terrible situation, it is fair to ask: "Why become a journalist?" Indeed, why do we risk our lives to bring news to the world?

There is no doubt that without a free press there can be no freedom for a country. I tell the Council that we have a higher objective for good and that by doing our jobs we feel that we are saving lives. We need the media for our troubled country to grow and to help inform, provide laughter with entertainment, provide education with information, and play our role in building peace. We talk to all sides in the conflict, providing the platform for the debate and political discourse that will shape the future.

When a journalist is killed, the news dies too. A whole society can be forgotten simply because there is no one left to tell its stories.

The concern here is, how long can the bravery of Somali journalists and their determination continue? We are few remaining. What participants discuss here today will help save lives. Action can be taken.

Rebuilding the justice system is a long-term challenge for Somalia, but the international community can still help. In Somalia there is no effective justice system to protect journalists. There are concerns about possible restrictions in a draft media law. Immediate steps can be taken towards ensuring effective and impartial investigations into the murders of journalists, and the prosecution of those responsible. We need support and training. We are citizens who want to report the truth.

I am just one man — a reporter — but the voices of the people I speak to and the stories I write go out on my news wire to be read all around the world.

Many colleagues have had to leave Somalia, fleeing the country for safer lands. I remember my friend and colleague Mohamed Ibrahim Rageh. He fled the country in 2008 and sought asylum in Uganda, fearing for his life. But he was a brave man, and he changed his mind and came back home. He once told to me, "Perhaps I want to die telling the news." Unfortunately, earlier this year, they shot him dead while playing with his daughter in front of his house.

All of my colleagues who have been killed had one thing in common: they were committed to telling the story of their country to the rest of the world. Sitting here today, I want to say that we will not fail that dream. We will never be discouraged. We will stay the course and continue telling the world about the crises in our country, to help save lives, and to develop peace. But even sitting here, so far away from my home on the other side of the world, in such a very different situation as compared to life in Mogadishu, is not without risk. In showing my face to the Council and the world, I increase the threat of becoming a target when I go back home. But I am a journalist. They may call me a dead man walking, but I report the news.

The President: I thank Mr. Abdinur for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Engel.

Mr. Engel: My name is Richard Engel. I work for NBC News as the chief foreign correspondent. I have been working in this very bizzarre business of ours for about 17 years. I usually go from one trouble spot to the next. I know several of the people who are also speaking today — Ghaith — and I just met Mustafa earlier. I commend him for speaking today, because working in Mogadishu is truly a very dangerous experience. Hopefully, he is not a dead man walking.

What I want to talk about today is, who is a journalist. I want to thank the people in the Chamber for taking up this very important cause. I know there are a lot of important issues going on in the world. For us in this business, this is one that is dear to our hearts and something we think about every day. It is really important for freedom and democracy and the spreading of information and knowledge.

For the past 17 years, I have been going from place to place. I have had some bad experiences. About six months ago, I was kidnapped in Syria. In a gunfight, we managed to escape. Some of the people who were holding us were killed in that gunfight. I have been detained many times by different Governments, and I have been denied visas. I am therefore familiar with the environment that foreign journalists work in.

I had a moment of clarity, if you will — or a moment of confusion, I think I should say — not long ago. I was in Turkey, covering Taksim Square. There were ongoing clashes between the people in the Square and the police. We were there filming the clashes and trying to talk to the activists and to talk to the police, who actually did speak to us, despite all the tear gas.

As I stepped back a little bit, I looked around at the scene. There were people with big cameras, there were people with small cameras, and there were people with cell phones. There were some people with cell phones who wore gas masks who were clearly part of the conflict and of the clashes that were ongoing. There must have been a dozen or two dozen people filming the clashes, which involved maybe a few hundred people.

As I looked at that very confusing situation, I thought to myself, who are all these people? Are they all journalists? And I thought, from the police's perspective — which is not a perspective one would expect journalists to think from — this must be very confusing. They do not know who we all are; we are wearing gas masks. Some people were wearing what looked like professional gas masks, and some people had just painters' masks on. And there were people with cell phones, and some people, as I said, had stones and cell phones in their hands. It was very confusing.

What I want to do today is to maybe offer some concrete ideas about protecting journalists. I think in order to do that one has to examine the question of who is a journalist. With that preface, let me go to my prepared remarks.

Protecting journalists these days is hard, perhaps harder than ever, because one has the tackle the question of who is a journalist and who is an activist in way that never existed before.

If one goes back 50 years or even just 15 years, journalists were well known. We carried badges that identified where we worked. We were guests on the diplomatic scene. We dined with ambassadors in garden courtyards in Cairo and Bombay. I did that myself many times; it was very pleasant. We were considered a league of special people who needed to be protected because our jobs often upset powerful and dangerous people. We were like diplomats in a way, posted to far-away places, and we needed a kind of special status so we could stay objective. Diplomats such as Council members have immunity so that they cannot be tried in local courts, because they will often tell Governments the kind of information they do not want to hear. Journalists had a more informal but generally understood status so that we could do the same thing for our readers and our viewers. That is the way it worked for over a century, since the Battle of Little Bighorn.

Now, let us go back to that scene in Taksim Square. There are bloggers. There are tweeters. There are freelancers who see themselves as activists. There are freelancers who actually join rebel groups, and some of them carry guns. If the discussion today is about protecting journalists, one must first decide who gets that protection. Who deserves it, and who forfeits it?

Over the past couple of years, I have often spent quite a bit of time with the opposition — the rebels — in Syria, and many of them carry cameras. The ones who carry the cameras call themselves journalists, but in general they are not journalists; they are rebels with cameras. They are part of the fight.

I have a general rule, which I think might be useful for some here. If one cannot or will not write an article that goes against one's cause, then one is not a journalist and does not deserve to be treated like one. What one is doing should fall under the protection of free speech, which is a much broader and an important discussion to have. But today we are not talking about just free speech; we are talking about protecting reporters. And the test goes both ways.

Consider a reporter who works for a State television station — a Syrian television station, since I used the Syrian rebels as an example. That reporter most likely cannot or will not write against his Government. If he

does not, then he probably fails the test as well. He is not a journalist either. I am not saying that these two people — the rebel with the camera and the State broadcaster — deserve to be mistreated, but they both are fundamentally different from journalists.

This is where it gets more complicated. What about the freelancers and activists? Consider this case. It is a hypothetical case, but I have seen many people just like this. There is a young activist who uses Twitter and he gets arrested in Egypt. This theoretical writer-activist is anti-Government, anti-police. His tweets are full of four-letter words telling the police exactly what they should do to themselves. This is his life, this is probably what he does all the time.

But this activist — and here is the key difference — is good at what he, or she, does. They get good information, and it is usually correct, and this person has some 15,000 followers on Twitter. They have a small audience, but they do have an audience. Then they are arrested. What do we do? Does one consider him or her a journalist, does one offer them the protection of a journalist? Does one demand his release, perhaps on the grounds of free speech or of political expression? I do not think just because a person knows how to use Twitter he or she is necessarily a journalist, but just because one does use Twitter does not mean one is not a journalist. It is a judgement call, but I think somebody needs to make that call.

This is not just a theoretical judgement call. It has real consequences. This why the distinctions are so important.

These days Governments, tyrants, dictators and even democracies seem to be happy with all of this ambiguity because we can all be lumped into the category of troublemakers. We are all bloggers and punks and rebels with cameras. We are all lumped into the same, generally negative, harmful category called the media. There is absolutely no respect for career journalists. We are arrested, we are detained, we are harassed, we are kidnapped. We are killed. Before, if a Government wanted to deport a major correspondent from an American television network or a newspaper or a news agency, it did so knowing there would be consequences. Today, several Governments routinely do that, and worse.

I think a big reason why is because we are all just troublemakers. We are all part of the same nebulous category, and the guild of professionals is not recognized anymore. I think it should be. Just as the representatives in the diplomatic community need protection to be objective, if the international community wants professionals who are also objective, we need some protection as well.

I think it is important to pick one's battles. Perhaps there should be two types of campaigns: one to protect free speech for activists who use the media in order to advance their causes and their beliefs, whatever those causes may be, and the other for a renewed commitment to defend dedicated and trained professionals who take risks to deliver the kind of information Council members need to make their decisions.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Abdul-Ahad.

Mr. Abdul-Ahad: I feel overwhelmed by all the speeches given here. I do not know if I can add anything.

The point is, journalists have been killed since the beginning of conflict. The fact that one is standing there in a conflict between two warring parties means one is asking for trouble. One exists in that war zone. Yet, in the past decade or maybe earlier, there has been a systematic hunting down of journalists, who are being killed, detained, chased, tortured and sometimes treated as commodities. Many foreign journalists in my country, Iraq, have been mistreated in some such fashion just because they are foreigners.

We have lost sight of the fact that we are just journalists, just professionals trying to tell our stories, like doctors, like nurses, like anyone else. We have become a way to pressure, to influence the conflict from one side or the other. I do not mean only warlords or rogue elements or any particular group. People who kill, detain or capture journalists have a sense of immunity. The helicopter pilot who kills a camera man is never questioned; he never pays for that. The tank commander who kills another journalist is never captured. The officials who detain, torture and intimidate people are never brought to trial. They are never shamed in public, in front of the world. It creates a sense, among us and in me, that maybe we deserve that. Maybe we are asking for trouble by being there.

We are asked why we go there. Is it just to tell a story, just to witness a conflict? Is it hubris? I personally would have replaced a van full of journalists with one nurse in Mogadishu during the famine, but we have to be there. We are there. We are telling a story. I do not

mean that in this era we have an exclusive right to tell the story. Many people tell it, so we do not have that exclusivity anymore. But why are they targeting us? Why are they chasing us?

When I was in solitary confinement in Libya, the jailer would come to talk to me every night and tell me: it is you journalists who have started all these troubles, it is you journalists who have created that. I would try to explain to him, from behind the bars: If it was not for your people in revolution against your dictator, if it was not for the people, the masses, going out on the streets, I would not be there. If it was not for your oppression in certain States, if it was not for your killing, the famine there, we would never go there. We would be sitting happily in our countries and writing from behind a desk. But the fact that there is oppression brings us into that conflict and makes us part of it.

To go to the main point here, I think there is a sense of immunity about killing a journalist. I know very well that my good friend in Mogadishu is worth a bullet. One bullet and he will be killed, and no one will be questioned after that bullet. And it is not only us, the foreign journalists. When I was detained in Afghanistan I had the entire *Guardian* newspaper working to release me. The United Nations was involved in releasing me from Libya. But what about the people who work in the conflict, the local journalists — Iraqis, Somalis, Afghans, Egyptians, from all over the world — those are the people we leave behind. We pay them handsomely for their services, and we leave them to be ground under the wheels of civil war, the wheels of famine. Those are also people who are part of this community of journalists, who deserve to be protected.

I think this is an amazing opportunity — to be honest, I am really overwhelmed — for the Security Council to make an effort to recognize journalists as part of a humanitarian effort to tell a story. Many participants here hate us, by the way, and I know that. I think it is a sign that we are doing our job properly if we have managed to piss them off. But there has to be some sort of balance. Let us be there, let us be treated as human beings. Just do not kill us.

The President: I thank Mr. Abdul-Ahad for his briefing. I would like to thank all our briefers today for their thoughtful and very moving comments.

I now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank you, Madam President, for holding this important debate today. I would also like to warmly thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his valuable briefing and the representatives of the media — Mr. Engel, Ms. Carroll, Mr. Abdinur and Mr. Abdul-Ahad — for sharing their moving experiences and powerful insights with the Security Council this morning.

Journalists help to shape our understanding of the world by providing accurate, impartial reports of what is happening around us. That is particularly important in conflict areas, where access to information is challenging and often inconsistent. Journalists often place themselves in dangerous situations in order to reveal the facts. They go where most of us are unable to go in order to report and reveal. They seek out and bear witness to human rights violations and the violation of international laws. That is why they should have the freedom to report the news without fear of reprisal or being targeted.

Unfortunately, journalists, human rights defenders and non-governmental organizations promoting freedom of expression continue to be specifically targeted across the world. Last year was one of the bloodiest on record with regard to journalists' deaths. One hundred and twenty-one were killed and more than 200 imprisoned. Eighteen of those killings were in Somalia alone. And not much has changed this year.

Many here will recall the murder of the journalist Liban Abdullahi Farah only a few weeks ago. Liban worked for the London-based channel Kalsan TV. He filed a series of reports on the election campaigns in Puntland in Somalia. Liban was shot six times in the neck and chest by three gunmen. His murder demonstrates that exposing injustice and abuse often takes journalists to unsafe places, where they are at greater risk of random violence as well as intentional targeting. In Syria, eight journalists have been killed this year alone, and at least 39 since the conflict began. Case after case of journalist killings around the globe underscore that murder is the most brutal form of censorship. It is our moral duty to protect those who risk their lives in the name of truth, justice and human rights.

The United Kingdom is deeply committed to the protection of civilians in situations of conflict, including the protection of journalists, and fully supports resolution 1738 (2006). Deliberate targeting

of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel who are reporting on armed conflicts and not directly participating in hostilities is unacceptable. All parties to an armed conflict must comply fully with their obligations under international law related to the protection of civilians, including journalists, media professionals and associated personnel. As the Council reaffirmed in February's presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/2), journalists should not be differentiated from civilians and should be respected and protected as such under international humanitarian law.

International journalists can and do try to mitigate the risks of working in conflict zones, as we have heard. Civil society plays an important role in assisting journalists in that regard. For example, the Committee to Protect Journalists has published a security guide that suggests ways journalists can protect themselves while covering armed conflict, organized crime and corruption, including guidance on security training, protective gear and satellite technology. Columbia University here in New York has supported valuable research on the psychological trauma that journalists may face in their work and on measures to address it.

But despite heightened awareness, killings are on the rise. Danger is compounded by the failure of States to prosecute those who kill journalists. That culture of impunity, which all the journalists have spoken about today, must end. In countries where justice for such crimes is left unaddressed, there is clear evidence that systematic violence against the press recurs year after year. States must do more, not only to protect journalists but to bring to justice those who kill them. Media outlets should also do more to develop and sustain safety provisions for their staff.

The international community must also do its part. Journalists provide an invaluable service to the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, by reporting on situations that threaten peace and security. The United Nations has produced a plan of action on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. The United Kingdom fully supports the plan, which will help States develop legislation and mechanisms to allow for freedom of expression and support efforts to impiement existing international rules and principles. We encourage all Member States to work together with the United Nations to implement its provisions.

It is a sad irony that the deaths of journalists and support staff are themselves underreported by the media. The vast majority of journalists killed are local reporters whose murders go almost entirely unnoticed. They simply become statistics. That group often has no access to the protection and guidance offered by large media and civil society organizations. They are the most at risk and the most in need of support. And as we have heard, most of them are not killed in armed conflict; only about one in four are killed in war zones. The great majority are killed in their own countries in times of peace, covering serious public-interest issues such as corruption and crime. That is deplorable. The murder of journalists is an attack on democracy and on the goal of promoting free speech.

In every part of the world, during times of peace and conflict, journalists broadcast the people's voice. The Council must recognize and support that goal. We must continue to take steps to protect journalists and enable them to report, for their reporting is one crucial element in the difficult path towards peace.

Mr. Kadangha-Bariki (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Madam, for organizing this debate on the protection of journalists in armed conflict. I would also like to thank the four journalists who shared their moving stories. Finally, I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his briefing on the situation.

Journalists work in increasingly dangerous situations, risking their lives in war zones in their professional capacity to report on the horrors of conflict and violations of humanitarian law and international human rights law. In 2012 alone, 121 journalists were killed and more than 200 imprisoned. In 2012, the murder of journalists in armed conflict increased by 49 per cent, by comparision with 2011.

We have seen and heard Kathleen Carroll's long list, which we found very touching. The story told by Mr. Mustafa spoke eloquently about the risks taken by journalists in armed conflict. However, ever since the Hague Convention of 1907, journalists have been protected by international humanitarian law. This was followed by the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1997 Additional Protocols, as well as by resolution 1738 (2006), not to mention situation-specific resolutions and presidential statements adopted by the Security Council.

Togo welcomes the initiatives taken by regional entities, including the African Union workshop on

security and the protection of African journalists, to reaffirm their dedication to defending liberty and freedom of information, including in times of war and danger. My delegation believes that these initiatives should contribute to the establishment of a legally binding regional instrument, ensuring the protection of journalists in situations of armed conflict.

Despite their protection, attacks on media professionals are linked to the inadequacy of their protection, wartime practices, the very objectives of journalism itself, and impunity. As far as the inadequacy of protection measures is concerned, the responsibility may lie with the decision taken in 1975 to consider journalists as civilians, rather than according them special status so as to avoid weakening the protection of civilians. Progress in communications over the past 20 years has allowed information in modern conflicts to be used as a weapon of war that belligerents either covet or destroy, even as they target the journalists who furnish it.

When it comes to wartime practices, belligerents want to cover up proof of atrocities, prompting them to intimidate and silence journalists so that they can escape prosecution. Moreover, in order to protect themselves, journalists sometimes bear arms or are accompanied by armed forces, undermining the protection from which they could benefit. As to the objectives of journalism, journalists' efforts to remain impartial may be misperceived by belligerents, who may rightly or wrongly overestimate the subjectivity of the information provided by journalists, and thus identify the latter as enemies.

Furthermore, in an effort to remain competitive, news agencies may step up pressure on journalists to take unjustifiable risks. Finally, the impunity of perpetrators in carrying out attacks against journalists largely explains continued violations of their protected status in situations of armed conflict. Punishing the perpetrators of such violations effectively would serve as a real deterrent to non-State armed groups that do not feel bound by international laws protecting journalists. National armed forces may also be guilty of such violations. They should also bear a large part of the responsibility.

Togo feels that the protection of journalists in situations of armed conflict goes beyond States and requires the undivided attention of the United Nations and the Council with a view to identifying more protective regulations, which should be adapted to modern realities. The Council should include the issue of the protection of journalists in situations of armed conflict on its programme of work more frequently.

Togo also recommends including modules on the protection of journalists in armed conflict within curriculums for training national armed forces and soldiers in peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Li Boadong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson for his briefing. I have listened very carefully to statements by the four journalists.

During armed conflicts, journalists and media professionals represent a very distinct group of people. They are vulnerable civilians on the front lines of conflict, providing first-hand and timely information from the field. They often face injury, kidnapping and even death, taking enormous risks, including with their lives. China condemns all acts of violence against journalists in armed conflict and calls on parties to conflict to stop deliberate attacks against journalists and to support the effective measures adopted by the international community to protect journalists during armed conflict. I should like to make four observations in that respect.

First, the protection of journalists in armed conflict is an important part of the protection of civilians undertaken by the international community. Like civilians, journalists are not involved directly in hostilities and as such they should enjoy the protection of international humanitarian law. The relevant resolutions and presidential statements adopted by the Council have established the basic principles and frameworks for the protection of journalists in armed conflict. The full implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council is an effective way for the international community to protect journalists in wartime.

Secondly, the countries concerned should assume the primary responsibility for the protection of journalists in conflicts. The Governments of those countries have the primary responsibility for protecting civilians on their territories, including journalists. By protecting journalists in conflict, the international community must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned. At the same time, arties to the conflict should fulfil their obligations under the Geneva Conventions and do their best to prevent and stop journalists from being harmed. They

should also investigate and punish the perpetrators who have harmed journalists and violated international humanitarian law. The judicial systems of the countries concerned should play their full role in promoting the protection of journalists.

Thirdly, all agencies and organs of the United Nations should enhance their coordination and cooperation in jointly promoting the protection of journalists in conflict. China appreciates the efforts of UNESCO, the Human Rights Council and other agencies to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of journalists and to implement the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. We hope that in fulfilling their respective functions, all United Nations agencies will work in synergy to avoid duplication and improve efficiency. Media professionals should also abide by their professional code of conduct and the principle of impartiality and objectivity in their coverage, and avoid siding with one party and even fanning the violence.

Fourthly, with a view to the peaceful resolution of conflict, the Security Council should adopt an integrated conflict-prevention and peacebuilding strategy that enhances the protection of civilians, including journalists. The Council shoulders the weighty responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. People around the globe have high expectations of this organ. From my own three years of experience in the Council, I feel deeply that it should abide by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter; be steadfast in promoting cooperation, achieving common security and lasting peace; and provide civilians with the best and most effective protection. On the basis of these principles, China will become more deeply involved in the work of the Council in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We will work with other Member States in enabling the Council to play a greater role in maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I thank you, Madam President, for convening what is obviously a very important debate. I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General and our guest speakers for their very compelling testimonies, each of which underscored the indispensable role that journalists play in bearing witness to conflict, and the extraordinary risks they take — knowingly — to report to us. I can only hope that our own comments do not fall too short of the strength of the imperatives they have identified.

Every year, more journalists are being killed in bringing news and information to the public. The majority of these victims are local media workers covering local stories. In most cases, these killings go unpunished, and often almost unnoticed.

Journalists in conflict situations face unique risks. Whereas local populations may flee areas of intense fighting, journalists are drawn towards them. For reporters, proximity is necessary to ensure objective, first-hand reporting of the causes and consequences of conflict, and to challenge partisan views. Journalists are often the first to draw attention to violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. History shows that the deliberate targeting of journalists is a tactic often employed by parties to a conflict who do not want their actions exposed; it is a precursor to a situation spiralling out of control.

Journalists bring the humanitarian cost of conflict into stark relief. News stories and images make the consequences of our own inaction harder to ignore. Ideally, they can compel Governments and bodies such as the Council to take action, although this is not always the case, as we see today in Syria. But they did, for instance, help create the environment for the adoption of the principle of the responsibility to protect civilians against mass atrocity crimes.

Syria provides a tragic illustration of the impact of conflict on journalists. It is now the most dangerous country on Earth for journalists. Forty-one died there in 2012; some were deliberately targeted. Mali registered the biggest fall in press freedom in 2012 after the military coup and the takeover of the north by armed groups.

It is not just traditional journalists who face threats. As we have heard this morning, those engaged in new media, citizen reporters and bloggers also find themselves in danger. The rights of freedom of expression, opinion and association must be respected both online and offline. Parties to armed conflict must uphold all applicable international laws to protect civilians, including those that apply to journalists. They must do their utmost to prevent violations of international humanitarian law against journalists. The Council acknowledged this in resolution 1738 (2006). Our recent presidential statement on the protection of civilians (S/PRST/2013/2) in February reiterated the Council's resolve in this respect.

We believe the Council can do more to protect journalists in conflict situations. As the Secretary-General notes in his most recent report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/2012/376), the Council has made very few references to attacks against journalists in situation-specific resolutions. Therefore we welcome the inclusion in resolution 2102 (2013) establishing the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia of a reminder to the Government of Somalia of its obligation to protect journalists. This should be a template.

The Council can also assist by mandating peacekeeping missions to address the freedom and protection of journalists in their support to rule-of-law institutions and, as the representative of Togo has just recommended, by ensuring the necessary training for peacekeepers. Where it emerges that journalists have been attacked in serious violation of international humanitarian or human rights law, the Council must also look at ways to act to end impunity.

We welcome the implementation strategy 2013-2014 for the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, endorsed in February, as the Deputy Secretary-General noted, as a strong mechanism that will help countries promote the safety of journalists in conflict situations. With its focus on national capacity-building, we encourage its early implementation.

To conclude, attacks on journalists are, like all attacks on civilians, attacks on humanity. They are also attacks on the international community's ability, indeed on its need, to understand and respond effectively to conflicts that threaten international peace and security. Truth need not be the first casualty of war. Journalists need not be and should not be casualties of conflict.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this debate, the first on this topic since the adoption of resolution 1738 (2006). I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement and the journalists for their testimony, which allows us to better understand the challenges they face on the ground.

All are aware of the importance France attaches to the issue of protecting journalists. Given the resurgence of attacks on information professionals, especially in conflict zones, over six years ago France and Greece together submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council. Through resolution 1738 (2006) the international community committed itself to paying increased attention to the issue of protecting journalists in armed conflict. The Security Council spoke with one voice at that time. It was a decisive step.

Today, we note that, unfortunately, that step was insufficient. Quite to the contrary, it was far from being sufficient because 2012 was perhaps the most murderous year. More than 120 journalists were killed in the exercise of their profession, which was double the figure for 2011. Several hundred others were imprisoned and sometimes tortured. Many were subject to intimidation, kidnappings, forced disappearances and arbitrary detentions. Women journalists are often the deliberately targeted victims of harassment and sexual violence. Bloggers, be they professional journalists or simply citizens, are also being targeted in an increasingly systematic manner.

Yesterday in Libya and today in Syria, journalists are subject to persecution by regimes seeking to muzzle them. Some 100 journalists, including four French nationals, have been killed in Syria since the beginning of the conflict. They paid with their lives for their resolve to show the world the reality of the indiscriminate repression of the Syrian people. I have special thoughts for Didier François and Edouard Elias, French journalists who were kidnapped in Syria a month ago and who are still being held.

In all conflict areas, it is local journalists who pay the heaviest price for practicing their profession. That is the case in Somalia, where journalists are regularly targeted by armed groups. Five have been killed since the beginning of this year. These figures clearly show international that the challenge of protecting journalists is one that we still have to meet. Given the worrisome situation, I would recall that it is primarily the responsibility of Governments to protect journalists and to allow them to accomplish their work without impediment and in an independent manner. That requires, among other things, fighting impunity against the offenders of such violence. That issue has been mentioned both by the journalists here and by some of my colleagues. States must systematically investigate, apprehend and try those responsible. Currently, 90 per cent of the killings of journalists go unpunished. It is also up to the international community, especially the Security Council, to consider the matter and take action to protect journalists. Some courses of action have already been pointed out.

We must recall and recognize the vulnerability of journalists in conflict situations and do what is necessary in a more systematic manner so that peacekeeping operations provide protection for journalists as civilians who are under threat. Violence against journalists is not limited just to armed conflict situations, however. The majority of persecutions take place in countries at peace, very often where journalists are reporting on cases of corruption or organized crime.

In a resolution adopted in September 2012 (A/HRC/RES/21/12), the Human Rights Council denounced that reality and proposed several courses of action. Moreover, the work done by UNESCO should also be commended. The Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, developed by UNESCO last year, is an excellent initiative to fight impunity for the authors of violence against journalists. We call for its full and immediate implementation.

As we are all ware, freedom of information is at the heart of any democracy, whether when it comes to journalists, bloggers or war correspondents and associated personnel. They are the people who help us to understand our world and how it is evolving. It is clear for all to see that the knee-jerk reaction of the enemies of freedom is to gag the press, and that independent media are the first allies of democracy. Freedom of expression should be respected by everyone. It is our collective responsibility, and especially that of the Security Council, to work to ensure that this freedom be fully enjoyed.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We learned with interest about the initiative of the United States delegation to return to a discussion of one of the aspects of the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict, namely, the protection of journalists. We would like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson and the other briefers for their very interesting statements, which are a cause of concern.

In our view, instances of violence against journalists in armed conflict are unacceptable. Media professionals in complex military and political situations are providing an important function by informing the international community of the status of events, including humanitarian issues and the suffering of civilian populations. In the context of continuing armed conflicts, journalism has earned itself a reputation as one of the most dangerous professions. It is no coincidence that journalists, who are considered to be civilians under international humanitarian law, have a similar level of protection in armed conflict.

The primary responsibility in this area is borne by the warring parties. One of the major tasks of the international community and regional organizations is to assist national efforts in this area. At times, opinions are expressed about the wisdom of including additional international legal standards on the status of journalists and about reviewing their status. There are already legal norms and standards in place in that regard. Priority should be given to compliance with the relevant standards of international humanitarian law and to having States not yet party to existing international legal instruments accede to them.

It is clear that all attacks on journalists are unacceptable. Issues pertaining to the activities of journalists are already on the agenda of various international organizations and bodies. The topic is among the priorities of UNESCO, which is the main entity for considering the whole host of issues related to the safety of journalists. The Human Rights Council deals with the human rights element of journalistic activity. There is active work being carried out in this area by many regional organizations. The resulting division of labour facilitates ensuring the effective functioning of the relevant structures.

Against that backdrop, we believe that the task of the Security Council is to focus on issues having to do with ensuring the safety of journalists in the context of protecting civilians in situations of armed conflict. An important contribution in ensuring the safety of media professionals in extreme conditions is resolution 1738 (2006), which is the Council's basic document on the topic. In spite of measures being taken by the international community, the situation with regard to ensuring the safety of journalists could nevertheless be improved. Their rights are sometimes completely ignored, and their lives and health are unjustifiably at risk.

We saw clear violations of international law and the needs of journalists in missile strikes in Belgrade in 1999 and Tripoli in 2011. Those strikes led to casualties and the destruction of the equipment necessary for journalists to carry out their professional duties. Paragraph 3 of resolution 1738 (2006) directly states that the equipment of the media are civilian objects, and therefore should not be subject to attack.

Information from journalists concerning the actual events in areas of armed conflict has been noted by various United Nations bodies. Therefore, information concerning attacks in Libya have been taken up by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and have been the subject of their investigations. Information on the matter was also included in the most recent report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Human Rights Council. However, we have not yet received an answer in that serious investigation.

We can learn a great deal from the media that is of importance to the work of the Security Council. In recent times, we learned a lot about the illegal smuggling of weapons from Libya into Syria, as well as about violations of the weapons embargo with regard to Libya. The Sanctions Committee is aware of that information. It is important that the work be completed.

When dealing with the protection of journalists in situations of armed conflict, we also cannot forget the precautionary measures that should be observed by the representatives of the media themselves so as not to be subject to unjustified risk for themselves, their escorts and colleagues. We should also consider the responsibility for observing an internal code of contact by the correspondents and their superiors who send into areas of hostilities. Excessive pursuit of a scoop to the detriment of common sense in armed conflict can be highly dangerous. Of course, journalists as well as diplomats must comply with the laws of the host country.

Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea): Let me express my sincere appreciation to you, Madam President, for convening this open debate. I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and the four journalists for their comprehensive and informative briefings and compelling stories.

Journalists are killed, tortured and subjected to enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention, as well as intimidation and harassment, during conflicts. They reveal a clear picture of conflict situations, including the tragic suffering of civilians and violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. That makes journalists the target of attacks by parties to a conflict who do not want their actions exposed.

Attacks against journalists also constitute violations of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Greater threats to journalists increases the risks of restricting the freedom of the press through the chilling effect of self-censorship. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the Human Rights Council resolution on the safety of journalists , adopted last year, and calls upon all parties to put an end to such practices and to provide special protection to journalists.

Despite the Council's action on the issue, including its historic resolution 1738 (2006) and last February's presidential statement on the protection of civilians (S/PRST/2013/2), violence against journalists persists. It is extremely disturbing that between 111 and 153 journalists reportedly have been killed during the past 28 months in Syria. The situation is also troubling in Somalia, where last year alone, 18 journalists were killed. We also condemn abductions of journalists in conflict situations. In that regard, Dutch journalist Judith Spiegel and her husband, kidnapped by an armed group in Yemen just over a month ago, should be released immediately.

Against that backdrop, I would like to underline the following points. First, those responsible for violations against journalists should be pursued and held accountable no matter how long it takes. It is alarming that a huge percentage of such perpetrators enjoys impunity around the world. Failure to undertake effective investigations and to prosecute those responsible for attacks will lead to further violence in the future. The primary responsibility for protecting journalists, investigating each violation and prosecuting those responsible lies with Governments and State institutions. To that end, the necessary resources should be dedicated to preventing and investigating attacks, as well as bringing those responsible to justice.

While the majority of victims are male journalists, we note with concern that female journalists are also subject to violations in conflict situations. They face additional risks, such as those of sexual violence or sexual abuse in detention. We believe that a gender-sensitive approach is needed when considering measures to address the issue of violence against journalists.

Secondly, my delegation would like to further encourage coordination and cooperation among United Nations agencies, Member States and civil society with regard to ensuring the safety of journalists. My delegation welcomes and fully endorses the 2012 United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. We are also pleased that

its implementation strategy and work plan have been prepared, including all relevant stakeholders and United Nations agencies such as UNESCO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme.

The role of civil society is significant, given its expertise in the field. We welcome the active engagement of civil society in the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action and would like to further encourage it. Civil society, for its part, should strengthen its efforts to raise awareness of the risks faced by journalists and existing international standards to protect them.

Thirdly, the scope of journalists should not be interpreted restrictively and protection should be provided to a broad spectrum of journalists. The emergence of online journalists — both professionals and untrained so-called citizen journalists — plays an increasingly important role in documenting and disseminating news in real time. Online journalists should also be afforded the same protection as offline journalists.

Last but not least, the Council needs to be more vigilant about the safety of journalists and consider including specific language on the protection of journalists in relevant documents. We welcome the fact that the Council, in resolution 2067 (2012) on Somalia, specifically condemned violence against journalists for the first time, and in resolution 2093 (2013), adopted in March, emphasized the obligation of the Government of Somalia with respect to the protection of journalists. We should consider the need for a similar approach in all relevant situations.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this open debate on the protection of journalists, media and communication professionals and associated personnel. On the basis of our commitment to the freedom of the press in general, we value the possibility of addressing the issue with specific reference to conflict and post-conflict situations. We are grateful for the eloquent presentations of Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and Ms. Kathleen Carroll, Mr. Mustafa Haji Abdinur, Mr. Richard Engel and Mr. Ghaith Abdul-Ahad.

The topic of the protection of journalists is part of a long-standing debate, accentuated in recent times by explosive advances in information technology and news dissemination — for good or for evil. Although article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been interpreted in many circles as an unlimited endorsement of the freedom of opinion and expression, other voices have tried to qualify that endorsement, invoking issues ranging from security concerns to respect for traditions and cultural norms. Those subjects have been amply debated in many global forums, including the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, and above all UNESCO. Today's debate is focused on the protection of journalists in conflict and post-conflict situations — a topic that is clearly within the purview of the Council.

Journalists in situations of armed conflict face very particular circumstances. First, unless they are fully serving a party to the conflict and are perceived as adversaries by the opposing party, they form part of the civilian population not directly involved in the conflict and are therefore subject to international humanitarian law.

Secondly, they represent an especially vulnerable segment of the civilian population, not only because, through their exposure to the battle field, by definition they risk involvement in potentially dangerous activity, but also because they also risk exposure to potentially serious human rights violations inflicted by repressive Governments or armed militias. Either may lead to harassment, intimidation, incarceration, kidnapping and even violent death.

Thirdly, journalists play an especially important role by reporting events on the ground, particularly if they do so with objectivity and professionalism. We have heard eloquent examples of all three situations described by our four briefers from the profession.

As with the entire civilian population, the primary responsibility for the protection of journalists falls to the Government of the country in conflict, as highlighted in resolution 1738 (2006). But the international community can and must contribute to creating an environment that offers incentives to Governments and societies in conflict to respect the right of journalists to carry out their mission of informing, while it weighs consequences for those who seek to compromise that right. In other words, my delegation feels totally aligned with the aforementioned resolution, as well as with the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/2) adopted on 12 February, especially its reference to acts of violence against journalists.

Despite the Council's pronouncements, we note that, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, the situation has not improved; rather, it has worsened. There are alarming reports of imprisonment, beatings, disappearances and even violent deaths. Of similar concern are attacks against women journalists, who are even more vulnerable during armed conflicts.

Further, as Jan Eliasson and other colleagues have observed, the impunity rate for crimes against journalists continues to be very high. According to information from UNESCO, on average only one in ten cases of crimes committed against journalists over the past few years has led to a conviction. It should be recalled that journalists, as civilian persons, are also protected by international criminal law. Thus the Rome Statute classifies grave violations of international humanitarian law as war crimes. In the same vein, the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute has in various resolutions acknowledged the need for States and other parties to armed conflicts to protect journalists as civilians, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Finally, we recognize the fundamental role played by the communications media, which are exposed to the brutal reality of war. The protection of journalists must continue to be part of the global strategy to promote the protection of civilians while also bringing the horrors of war before public opinion. That is why this Council must persist in the defence of journalists in situations of conflict, an undertaking to which we are fully committed.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): This is the first time since 2006 and the adoption of resolution 1738 (2006) that the Council has met for an open debate on the protection of journalists. I would like to thank the American presidency for taking the initiative to organize this debate, at a time when the number of journalists killed in the exercise of their profession has reached an alarming level. The testimonies we have been offered speak volumes about the situation of journalists in periods of conflict and about the risks to which they are exposed. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Kathleen Carroll, Richard Engel, Mustafa Haji Abdinur and Ghaith Abdul-Ahad for sharing with us their experience on the ground. I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson, for his presentation.

Luxembourg fully supports the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union.

In the globalized, interconnected world to which we belong, information reigns supreme. Journalists are its primary transmitters. A free press is always the sign of a lively democratic society, by the same token, its absence is a sure indicator of authoritarianism. New technologies have multiplied the number of useful sources of information available to journalists; they have also accelerated the transmission of information.

In times of armed conflict, the role of journalists takes on yet another dimension. Their work contributes to making it possible for the world to know.

But the journalistic profession is increasingly accompanied by mortal dangers. Last year, according to UNESCO, 121 journalists were killed and more than 200 were jailed. Those are unprecedented numbers. As we have already been reminded this morning, 10 days ago in Somalia the journalist Liban Abdullahi Farah was killed on his way home from work. He was the sixth member of the press to be killed in Somalia this year, which makes that country one of the world's most dangerous for journalists. According to the International Press Institute, 54 journalists have been killed to date in 2013, many of them in Syria. In light of that disturbing increase, the reports of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians should devote a specific section to the issue of the safety and security of journalists, as mandated by resolution 1738 (2006).

We condemn in the strongest possible terms all attacks, physical and otherwise, that deliberately target journalists, as well as all other forms of intimidation. But our condemnation alone is not enough. We must act to ensure that journalists enjoy in practice the protection to which they are entitled by virtue of international humanitarian law. Resolution 1738 (2006) is very clear: journalists in periods of armed conflict must be viewed as civilians and as such must be respected and protected.

The Council invoked that principle in the presidential statement it adopted on 12 February (S/PRST/2013/2). I appeal to all parties to armed conflicts to take all possible measures to ensure respect for and protection of journalists in accordance with international hunaitarian law. In cases of violation, States are responsible for ending impunity and for bringing to justice those responsible for violations.

Considerable efforts have been made in recent years in the United Nations with respect to the protection of journalists. In April 2012, the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination adopted the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, initiated by UNESCO. The Plan of Action must be fully implemented.

Adequate follow-up must also be given to Human Rights Council resolution 21/12, adopted by consensus on 27 September 2012, on the importanace of the safety of journalists as a fundamental element of freedom of expression. We await with interest the compilation of best practices that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was charged with compiling, in collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Luxembourg supported those endeavours and will continue to do so.

We take this opportunity to encouarage greater cooperation among Governments, international organizations, civil society and representatives of the media. It could also be interesting to develop cooperation at the level of ombudsmen and national human rights institutions, as was recommended by the international conference on the safety of journalists held in Warsaw on 23 and 24 April 2013.

To conclude, I insist on the need for the Security Council to continue to give this matter all the attention it deserves. Journalists shoulder the responsiblity for protecting the truth. The Council should shoulder its own responsibility by guaranteeing their protection.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): First of all, I would like to thank the presidency for convening this open debate on the protection of journalists in armed conflict and for submitting a concept note on the topic (S/2013/393, annex). We are also grateful to Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson for his briefing and to the media representatives for their contribution to the discussion.

Journalists play an indispensable role in informing the public and the international community about events in conflict areas. As the Secretary-General noted in his report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict,

> "Journalists play a crucial role by reporting on the treatment and suffering endured by civilians in situations of conflict and on violations of humanitarian law and human rights" (*S/2012/376, para. 14*).

Indeed, the circumstances of armed conflict often expose journalists exercising their profession to risks that sometimes even exceed the level of danger normally encountered by civilians. The need to guarantee the safety of journalists has been repeatedly stated at the international level, and a number of important steps have been taken to ensure the protection of media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflict.

International law sets out clear provisions for the protection of journalists. First of all, it should be recalled that the right to the freedom of opinion and of expression is a human right guaranteed to all, including journalists, in accordance with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the relevant regional human rights instruments.

In addition, special rules of international humanitarian law apply to journalists who are imperiled by their professional duties in the context of armed conflict. According to Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflicts shall be considered as civilians and as such shall be respected and protected under international humanitarian law. That norm was recalled in Security Council resolution 1738 (2006) and the presidential statement of 12 February (S/PRST/2013/2). It is also widely recognized that the rule according to which civilian journalists engaged in professional missions in areas of armed conflict must be respected and protected as long as they are not taking a direct part in hostilities constitutes a norm of customary international law applicable in both international and non-international armed conflicts.

Furthermore, a number of other important efforts have been undertaken recently at the international level to address the protection of journalists in situations of armed conflict. Among them is resolution 21/12 on the safety of journalists, adopted in September 2012 by the Human Rights Council, and the 2012 UNESCO report containing the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.

At the same time, despite the development of unequivocal international norms and standards and the increased attention of the international community to

the protection of journalists, acts of violence against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflicts — in particular deliberate attacks in violation of international humanitarian law, as well as impunity for such violations — remain widespread. We condemn all such attacks against journalists and violations of their rights.

The role of journalists as monitors of atrocious crimes committed during armed conflicts has frequently led to their being targets of international attacks by parties to a conflict. Indeed, as is often said, the first casualty of war is truth. We pay tribute to journalists who, under dangerous circumstances, bravely perform their duties to inform the broader public about threats to international peace and security.

The increased brutality of armed conflicts and the changing nature of warfare nowadays give rise to the need for greater measures of protection for journalists at the national and international levels. It is important that the Security Council consistently maintain its focus on the topic and systematically recall its demand that all parties to armed conflict comply fully with their obligations under international law related to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including journalists, and take all necessary measures to prevent attacks against journalists and prosecute those responsible for such attacks.

In conclusion, I would like once again to commend the initiative of the United States in convening this open debate. We are confident that our discussions today will achieve their objective of demonstrating the Council's support for providing journalists with the necessary protection and to recall that all perpetrators of violence against journalists must be held accountable.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): Let me begin by thanking you, Madam President, for having organized this important open debate on the protection of journalists in armed conflicts.

I would like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General Mr. Jan Eliasson for his briefing and to recognize the presence here today of Ms. Kathleen Carroll, Mr. Mustafa Haji Abdinur, Mr. Richard Engel and Mr. Ghaith Abdul-Ahad. We commend their work, done despite the challenges and risks involved, and their dedication to ensuring that the world be informed.

Since Rwanda became a member of the Council in January this year, we have put our time into debating the protection of civilians in armed conflict, in both thematic debates and country-specific situations. Following the debates on the protection of civilians, sexual violence in conflict, children and armed conflict and specific human rights and humanitarian situations such as Syria, today we are discussing the protection of another group of people who are vulnerable in situations of armed conflicts, namely, journalists.

Journalists play a critical role in informing the world on ongoing conflicts and on our daily work in the Council. With new technology and social media we feel like we are living in various conflict theatres, following every event and breaking news. By reporting on cases of international concern, journalists provide us with useful information inside certain points of reference. In this context, it is always the worst news to hear when a person who was providing others perspective on a conflict was killed by a bomb or stray bullet or, even worse, was assassinated in cold blood by belligerents. At times, we hear that a well-known face was abducted by armed groups. Most of us followed the recent ordeal of our friend Richard Engel in Syria. In other cases, journalists are jailed, tortured, raped or sexually assaulted.

Rwanda is alarmed by reports of failure to comply with humanitarian obligations to protect journalists, including reports of deliberate killing, disappearance, torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment of journalists by parties to conflicts.

In addition, while recent reports indicate that the number of abuses against journalists has declined in some countries, it is our concern that the violence in Syria and Somalia continues to endanger journalists and media professionals reporting on those conflicts. We therefore find it rational for the Security Council, with regard to specific crisis situations, to always recognize the particular vulnerability of journalists in its resolutions and other outcome documents. In those cases, the Council can consider mandating the protection of journalists as a group of civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. In conflict situations with peacekeeping missions, the protection of journalists could be included in mission mandates. In the meantime, we urge armed groups in all conflict situations to ensure respect and protection for the civilian population, including journalists and their property, and to abide by international humanitarian law.

We find it pertinent to speak today on the reciprocal role of the media and journalists in engaging in activities that ensure the protection of civilians, most especially as catalysts of peace, rather than fueling armed conflicts. We believe the best protection is the prevention of armed conflicts in the first place.

It is of equal value to ensure that journalists reporting from war zones bear the moral responsibility to report in an accurate and balanced manner all stories in the proper context. The 1994 genocide in Rwanda is a stark and constant reminder that information can save or kill. Rwanda has been on the receiving end of the media being used in a destructive manner to perpetrate violence and instill hatred among the people. Indeed, in Rwanda the media proved to be a powerful tool for escalating the conflict. For instance the infamous Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines urged listeners to pick up machetes and take to the streets to kill what they called "cockroaches".

It is therefore important to stress that reporting comes with great responsibilities, and we call on all journalists and media professionals to resolve to report in an accurate and balanced manner.

However, the media have proved to be a powerful instrument for peacebuilding and reconciliation. In post-genocide Rwanda, the media have played a constructive role as bridge-builder and a tool for reconciliation. Since implementing media reforms in Rwanda, we are seeing growing media that have become an essential part of development, good governance and democratic progress, media that promote greater freedom and responsibility among practitioners, that promote improved public process and access to information, contribute to greater accountability and foster diversity and competition.

To conclude, let me play tribute again to all women and men around the world who, armed with a pen, a camera, a computer or a microphone, have taken the risk of leaving the comfort of their families to inform our own and have made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of truth for generations to come.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, I would like to begin by thanking you for having scheduled this debate on an important topic that is given relevance by the news every day. We would like to thank Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General, for his enlightening briefing, and the journalists — Ms. Kathleen Carroll, Mr. Mustafa Haji Abdinur, Mr. Richard Engel and Mr. Ghaith Abdul-Ahad — for having been willing to share with us their experience in covering conflict situations.

In their presence, I would like to pay tribute on behalf of my country to those journalists, media professionals and associated personnel who devote themselves to their task in respect for the rules of ethics in order to enlighten public opinion on the reality of conflicts and their consequences for civilians, particularly women and children.

Today's debate follows the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1738 (2006), which marked the start of a new phase in the process of raising the international community's awareness of the challenges weighing on the security of journalists in armed conflict. More recently, in a presidential statement dated 12 February (S/PRST/2013/2), the Council demanded that the parties concerned immediately put an end to violations of international law and reaffirmed its readiness to adopt targeted and graduated measures for the protection of civilians, including journalists. For its part, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 21/12 in September 2012, emphasizing the promotion of a safe environment, enabling journalists to carry out their profession in an independent manner. Finally, UNESCO adopted the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which contains several provisions.

We must note that, in spite of all those measures, the number of victims among journalists is continuing to grow. The year 2012 alone saw 32 deaths. We hope that today's debate will advance thinking on the best ways to protect journalists in times of war, taking into account the specificity and dangerous nature of their work.

In a world quintessentially full of information, the journalism profession has a vital, and unfortunately dangerous role to play even in normal times, but even more so in times of conflict, specifically in times of internal conflict. The direct exposure of journalists to the crossfire of parties to conflicts caused an African journalist to observe that the life expectancy of a journalist covering a conflict is a renewable 24 hours.

The coverage of conflicts is at the same time a mission and a responsibility. First, it is a mission because it allows journalists to bear first witness and provide information objectively and without bias. It is also a responsibility that requires integrity and impartiality

from the journalist, in order not to sacrifice journalistic principles to the immediacy of the information or the scoop. The protection of journalists, particularly in times of war, is therefore an absolutely necessity, as it embodies the respect of the freedom of expression and the right to information.

The context of conflicts exposes journalists directly or indirectly to every kind of danger. Competition, exclusivity restrictions and the actions of the parties to conflict contribute to making their mission even more dangerous and likely to get out of hand. The fundamental rights of journalists to life and to exercise their profession in favourable conditions, in safety and without constraint, must be guaranteed. Those rights go hand in hand with the protection of their right to freely express themselves and to have free access to all areas where the human condition requires the presence of journalists in order to report on the human condition according to international standards.

We the Member States, international non-governmental organizations and the international human rights mechanisms are called upon to continue to strive to ensure a free and safe environment for journalists to be able to perform their noble mission of informing, raising awareness and holding parties accountable to bring about an end of conflict.

Mr. Sahebzada Ahmed Khan (Pakistan): We would like to thank the United States for organizing today's important debate on an issue of great contemporary importance and relevance. We are also grateful to Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and the briefers for their useful insights on the subject.

First of all, I would like to pay tribute to and salute the journalists who have fallen in the line of duty. They are indeed the fallen brave.

The role and the importance of media in shaping public opinion and moral and political choices vis-à-vis conflict situations are becoming increasingly decisive in the modern world. For that reason, threats to the safety and security of journalists and associated media personnel have increased manifoldly in recent times.

Security Council resolution 1738 (2006), unanimously adopted by the Council more than six years ago, strongly condemned any intentional attacks against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel and sent out a strong signal to the parties to armed conflict that they should comply with their obligations under international law. The resolution also made a strong call for ending impunity in that regard.

While reiterating the provisions of that resolution, we need to take a fresh look at contemporary threats to journalists in armed conflicts, in view of the increasingly complex nature of conflict situations, increased use of terror tactics, blurring of boundaries between warring parties in non-international armed conflicts and between war correspondents and independent journalists, and new and emerging trends such as the concept of embedded journalism and use by media of protection afforded by private armed escorts.

It is a matter of concern that despite clear provisions of international law — in particular article 79 of Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions, which clearly identifies journalists engaged in professional missions in areas of armed conflict as civilians, provided they take no action that prejudices their civilian status — the deliberate targeting, arbitrary detention and internment of journalists in situations of armed conflict continue to be on the rise.

It seems that the problem is not a dearth of international legal standards and norms, but a lack of their understanding and implementation. It is therefore important to engage in a well-coordinated and comprehensive international awareness-raising campaign that highlights the existing provisions of international law and points out the consequences of their violation. Furthermore, ending impunity by bringing the perpetrators of attacks against journalist to justice would have a significant impact on the situation. The Security Council can play an important role by reinforcing this message in its decisions.

To ensure the neutrality and impartiality of journalists, such concepts as embedded journalism need to be carefully analysed, especially with regard to their impact on the safety and security of journalists. Moreover, employing distinctive emblems in conflict situations may also help.

Achieving the delicate balance between the safety and security of journalists and media personnel with the need for unfettered access to conflict areas is of crucial importance. The authorities concerned must share all information necessary to ensure the safety of media personnel, who should in turn take their advice into account and respect local laws and regulations. There is a balance to be struck between personal safety and professional prowess. Furthermore, increased

resources must be made available to train journalists covering situations of armed conflict, focusing on ways to cope with the changing nature of armed conflicts and the increasing threats of terrorism and kidnappings for ransom.

Today's debate is a reiteration of the strong message of resolution 1738 (2006) that the Security Council remains focused on the issue of the protection of journalists in armed conflict and is willing to play its role in this regard. We hope that we will continue to stand united towards ensuring this end.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Eliasson for his briefing and his thoughts, as well as each and every journalist present here today.

The protection of civilians in armed conflict is a topic to which the international community attaches great importance. It is therefore legitimate and necessary for the Security Council to address it in an ongoing manner. I should like to thank the United States presidency for raising the issue of the protection of journalists. This is the first time it has been discussed in the Security Council since 2006 (see S/PV.5613), when the Council adopted resolution 1738 (2006). My country was a member of the Security Council at that time, too. I thank the presidency for the concept note it has provided for this debate (S/2013/393, annex) and express our appreciation for the statements made by the journalists today.

According to the Secretary-General's 2012 report (S/2012/376), the state of protection of civilians remains terrible. Among violations of international humanitarian law, it describes ongoing attacks by combattants on non-combattants; disproportionate attacks; displacements within and across borders; violence against women and children, including sexual violence; air strikes, including with unregistered aircraft; and other actions that prevent or hinder the provision of humanitarian assistance, such as deliberate assaults on hospitals, schools and humanitarian operations. In many situations on the ground, journalists are principal victims of such violations of international humanitarian law.

We know that journalism is a critical tool in the exercise of the freedom of information and the press. It is also an important instrument in post-conflict and conflicts situations when civil society does not not necessarily have the resources to expose serious human rights violations or breaches of international humanitarian law. The reports of the Secretary-General and of the Director-General of UNESCO and other sources all reflect the frequency and gravity of attacks on journalists. The presidential statement adopted this year on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/PRST/2013/2) also reflects the Council's concern over such attacks.

In order to guarantee the protection of civilians and especially of journalists, we must duly consider two elements: respect for international humanitarian law in terms of attacks on journalists, and accountability. The Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, to which Argentina is a party, notes in article79 that "[j]ournalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians". This norm set out in Protocol I simply confirms a rule of international customary law, which holds that journalists enjoy civilian status under international humanitarian law. In accordance with common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions on non-international conflicts, journalists and associater personnel are non-combattants and must be protected as such, along with their support staff.

The 2012 UNESCO report indicates, as other colleagues have said, that in the biennium 2010-2011, 127 journalists and media workers were assassinated. This figure represents an increase over the previous biennium. The report concludes that there is a growth trend in the number of deaths among journalists. It therefore proposed the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which was also adopted in 2012 by the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination. We hope that the Plan of Action, the second inter-agency meeting on which took place in late 2012, will help to strengthen measures to protect journalists in conflict and post-conflict situations, and ensure accountability.

The two issues of respect for international humanitarian law and the fight against impunity were also reflected in resolution 21/12 of the Human Rights Council, adopted in October 2012. The resolution, which was sponsored by more than 50 countries, including Argentina, energetically condemns all violence against journalists and expresses concern that attacks on journalists very often go unpunished.

I should like to address one aspect of this issue that I believe strongly promotes the lack of safety endured

by men and women of the press. It is often said that the first victim of war is truth. It would appear that what we are saying today is that its second victims are those who are responsible for telling the truth. A 2003 report of the International Labour Organization notes that there was a moment in the war in Afghanistan when attacks on reporters were more numerous than attacks on the military.

Who is responsible for the safety of journalists in a context where the dangers faced by members of the press in conflict situations are growing year by year? Economic and technological changes in the journalism industry create even more pressure on media workers to produce more news at greater risk and less cost. Some communication organizations, in their zeal to save on costs, use freelance professionals and part-time local correspondents, to the detriment of full-time staff and highly-skilled personnel. Although there is great variation as to how such independent workers are defined and treated by companies, at times some lack insurance as part of their compensation and may not have available ready cash that could help get them out of emergencies and foreseeable risks.

An environment of increasing informality in all areas of the labour market, combined with the precarious employment situation of war journalists, compounds the risks to which men and women are exposed during their work. A few days ago, journalist Francesca Borri wrote in the *Columbia Journalism Review* how routine it was for her to sacrifice her personal security in her work in Aleppo in order to be able to compete with the scarce resources offered by companies:

> "[w]hether you're writing from Aleppo or Gaza or Rome, the editors see no difference. You are paid the same: $70 per piece. Even in places like Syria, where prices triple because of rampant speculation. So, for example, sleeping in this rebel base, under mortar fire, on a mattress on the ground, with yellow water that gave me typhoid, costs $50 per night; a car costs $250 per day. Not only can you not afford insurance — it's almost $1,000 a month — but you cannot afford a fixer or a translator."

Another urgent and crucial matter is putting an end to impunity for grave violations against civilians, as part of the civilian population. Sixty per cent of the cases involving the 995 journalists who have been murdered in armed conflict since 1992 have gone unpunished.

In conclusion, it is clear to everyone that, even properly implementing all the necessary precautions, war reporters practice a risky profession in which their lives are endangered. Nevertheless, many of the attacks against reporters and many of the deaths catalogued in the past decade are neither necessary a condition of the profession nor an automatic effect of war. Rather, they are the outcome of specific working conditions that have been transformed through technological changes, new military strategies with regard to the press and transformations that directly affect the working conditions of journalists in general, thereby placing those who work in armed conflict in particularly vulnerable situations.

Argentina endorses two recommendations that we have heard from numerous journalist non-governmental organizations, namely, recognizing the special vulnerability of journalists in conflict situations and incorporating that perspective in the mandates of all peacekeeping missions established by the Council.

I thank the President for organizing this debate. For this commitment to become a reality, we must focus our attention not only on conflict situations, in which journalists work every day, but also on the professional, economic and structural conditions that underpin their work, with a view to ensuring freedom of the press, information and expression.

I thank Ms. Kathleen Carroll, Mr. Mustafa Haji Abdinur, Mr. Richard Engel and Mr. Ghaith Abdul-Ahad. I also thank Mr. Robert Cox, a journalist with the *Buenos Aires Herald*, who in 1977 was illegally detained and kidnapped under State terrorism in my country for having been the first to publish, for the benefit of the international community, that my country had been systematically violating human rights by way of kidnappings, torture, disappearences and murder. Not only was he detained and kidnapped, but he had to quit Argentina in 1979. I again take this opportunity to say, never again!

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

I thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson for his briefing and for his support for this issue. We also greatly appreciate the remarks of our four briefers, who have made a compelling case for the challenges and risks that journalists face. Their experiences demonstrate the indispensible role that journalists play in focusing the world's attention on conflict. That is why the United

States has convened today's open debate on protecting journalists.

Journalists are literally our eyes and ears in every corner of the world. They sound the warning when local tensions threaten to erupt into war. They document the suffering of civilians in conflict areas. And they expose human rights violations and war crimes. Journalists are critical to the Security Council's ability to remain well informed so that it may fulfil its mandate to maintain international peace and security.

Reporting from the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s brought attention to mass atrocities there and helped to mobilize the response of the international community, including support for a war crimes tribunal. More recently, the Council relied on videos, photos and the reported accounts of citizens to understand the events taking place in Libya in 2011. That real-time reporting gave us the information necessary to act quickly to prevent even more horrific violence by the Al-Qadhafi regime.

Tragically, this work is not without sacrifice, as the case of journalist Mohamed Nabbous and his wife Samra Naas demonstrated. When a sniper killed Mo while he was broadcasting live during Al-Qadhafi's assault on Benghazi, Samra, pregnant with their first child, took his place, declaring "What he has started has got to go on, no matter what happens."

In Syria, the Al-Assad regime continues to kill, imprison and torture journalists. Mazen Darwish, head of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression, the only Syria-based non-governmental organization accredited to the United Nations, has been held incommunicado since February 2012, and was reported to have been tortured by the Al-Assad regime. His so-called crime, like so many of his colleagues, was to exercise his universal right to freedom of expression to show the world the regime's atrocities.

As others have noted, resolution 1738 (2006) reminds us that journalists operating in armed conflict are protected under international humanitarian law. Given the invaluable contribution of journalists to our work, the Council must do all it can to ensure their protection. Therefore, we ask the Secretary-General to increase his focus on the safety and security of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in his reports on the protection of civilians and in his reports on peacekeeping missions whose mandates include civilian protection.

Furthermore, we urge Member States, especially those that contribute troops and police to United Nations peacekeeping missions, to ensure that their judicial officials, law enforcement officers and military personnel know their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law as regards the safety of journalists.

Impunity for violence against journalists must end. The United States endorses fully the 2012 United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. We encourage Member States to enact its provisions and put in place voluntary protection programmes for journalists operating in conflict areas.

We also underscore the specific risks faced by women journalists, including sexual and gender-based violence. A gender-sensitive approach is needed when considering measures to address the safety of journalists.

New and emerging forms of twenty-first century communication technologies, including various Internet forums, blogging, texting and other social media platforms, have transformed the way journalists, including citizen journalists, work. Those new forms of communication have allowed wider and more rapid dissemination of information from conflicts across the globe. We call on all Member States to maintain and safeguard the infrastructure that enables the work of journalists in situations of conflict.

In conclusion, recognizing the value of the work of journalists reporting on conflict, the Council has an obligation to help protect those who provide us with so much vital information. We thank journalists around the world who risk their lives to seek the truth and shine light on the darkness for the entire world to see. The Security Council could not do its job without them.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I wish to remind speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Machado (Brazil): The case for protecting media professionals in armed conflict is both

humanitarian and political. As civilians, they are protected under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and its Additional Protocols. In addition, resolution 1738 (2006) urges parties to armed conflicts to do their utmost to prevent violations of international humanitarian law against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel.

The political dimension of the issue derives from the fact that unbiased media reports dispatched from conflict zones often serve a fundamental public interest. In many cases, reliable and independent media coverage brings to the attention of the international community, including the Council, the many horrors of armed conflict, and prompts us to show the political will needed to stop violence and restore peace.

In that regard, protecting journalists in armed conflict is equal to protecting and promoting their fundamental role in helping to build sustainable peace.

Brazil therefore stresses our collective responsibility to protect media professionals in armed conflict and firmly repudiates the killing, harassment, intimidation and kidnapping of journalists, as well as any other violence against them in such situations.

States must promote the right to freedom of expression, not only during armed conflicts but also in their aftermath. That right is an important tool to empower the people to participate fully in the political life of post-conflict countries. Its respect is key to peacebuilding and national reconciliation.

The Brazilian Government has been actively engaged in the protection of media professionals in general, as shown in our participation in the ongoing pertinent discussions in the Human Rights Council, as a member of the core group on the safety of journalists and on the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet, and in UNESCO.

Protecting journalists in armed conflict also requires fully respecting their right to privacy in their professional communications, including over the telephone and the Internet. Arbitrary surveillance of private exchanges and conversations by journalists may easily put them at greater risk, since they themselves must safeguard the privacy, security and anonymity of their sources. In some cases, for those who report on armed conflict from the field, inadvertently exposing their sources may mean the difference between life and death or may put at risk their very ability to continue to do their work. In addition, the illegal surveillance of journalists' communications by parties and non-parties to conflicts runs counter to declared commitments to democracy and the rule of law.

We therefore highlight the importance of the promotion, protection and enjoyment of the right to privacy on all electronic media. Democratic and transparent multilateral governance of the Internet is essential for the full and appropriate utilization of that powerful tool without fears of undue and illegal interference by both private entities and public institutions. In that context, secret surveillance programmes are a source of grave concern, as they may violate the human rights of individuals. As stated by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, the "alleged large-scale violations of the right of privacy by surveillance programmes raise a number of important international human rights issues that need to be addressed".

Secret surveillance programmes are also a violation of the sovereignty of States. In that regard, the members of the Common Market of the South have decided to take a number of measures, including at the United Nations, with a view to raising the issue and seeking the adoption of multilateral rules for Internet governance that ensure the protection of communication, the privacy of individuals and respect for State sovereignty.

As I indicated earlier, the protection of journalists in armed conflict is both a humanitarian and a political task. Such a task is permanent and, in some quarters, urgent. Brazil fully supports all efforts by the Council, consistent with its Charter responsibilities, to successfully address that challenge.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): We welcome your initiative, Madam President, in bringing truly relevant and innovative briefers to the Security Council. Journalists reporting on situations of armed conflict, like the briefers we have heard today, deserve credit for bringing to Headquarters the grim reality of armed conflict.

Together with the United Nations own reporting, news media form part of the international community's decision-making matrix, as has already been made clear by a number of Council members, not least in respect of the decisions made by the Council itself. Media

can also help transform and resolve conflicts, as the work of professional and citizen journalists disperses information, discloses wrongdoing and sheds light on atrocities. Indeed, the presence of an independent media is essential to stress-test other reports of what is happening in conflict areas, and is an important check on the so-called official line, whether it be from host Governments, interested stakeholders or even the United Nations itself.

We have been reminded several times in this debate that truth is often the first casualty of war. In speaking truth to power, journalists in conflict situations can help right that wrong. The flow of information and the exposé of war crimes are crucial mechanisms for combatting impunity in respect of war crimes.

Many of the important points that might be raised in relation to this topic are also, more generally, relevant to the protection of civilians. But today we should focus on aspects relating to the special characteristics of journalists themselves.

On reviewing the list of the many media personnel killed in Syria over the past year, it is striking how many are not affiliated with traditional media organizations. International humanitarian law protects new media, such as Internet media, bloggers, online videos and other digital news sources, all now so ubiquitous in this digital age. But this democratization of content also means that, unlike traditional media, new media journalists and other practitioners may not have the same level of awareness of, and training in, respect of their rights or of the practical, protective actions they might take in conflict zones. We therefore strongly commend initiatives taken by the International Committee of the Red Cross and by non-governmental organizations such as Reporters Without Borders to fill that knowledge gap.

Media deaths, sadly, do not correspond to the intensity of combat. The large number of deaths in Syria and Somalia compared to those in other conflict zones emphasizes that different conflicts require different, tailored responses to protect journalists — an issue that should now be addressed by the Security Council at the country-specific level, for which we encourage the inclusion of specific language on the topic in the relevant Council mandates. It is not sufficient anymore that this issue be addressed only through a resolution that is now six and a half years old; it must be operationalized in the field, allowing journalists access to their sources and, as the representative of Brazil has just stressed, allowing them to protect those sources and, in particular, to protect them from harm.

Above all, journalists can play an important role in conflict prevention, horizon-scanning and early warning. In the absence of peacekeeping or observer operations and political missions, the international community relies on the media to inform and alert it to situations that are at risk of deteriorating into armed conflict, and that, I know, can be particularly helpful to the Council's elected members. We must all support the media as important actors that enable the United Nations and the Security Council to act in preventive mode.

It is inherent in journalists' work that in war zones they assume a task that exposes them to danger. Indeed, they often seek it out, and, paradoxically, we benefit from that proximity. The challenge for the international community is to ensure that, in performing their essential function of speaking truth to power, journalists are not also exposed to deliberate, targeted acts of violence. That, I suggest, is the task — indeed, the responsibility — we should reaffirm today.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Prosor (Israel): Thank you, Madam President, for convening this debate and bringing awareness and attention to an important subject. Ambassador DiCarlo, may I also add, on a personal note, that it is my distinct pleasure to give this statement while you are presiding over this meeting.

So far this year, 26 journalists have been killed and 175 imprisoned trying to do their job. Instead of telling the story, journalists are increasingly becoming the story itself. We must be united in our condemnation of those who seek to silence the press and hide the truth.

As we speak, the Middle East is in flames. From the Straits of Gibraltar to the Straits of Hormuz, people are crying out for democratic reforms and freedoms. The facade of the so-called Arab Spring has fallen away. In its place remain the repression, chaos and confusion that have long defined the region. Attacks on the media are increasing all over the world, but nowhere is it more dangerous to be a journalist than in the Middle East.

Every day, people all over the globe turn on televisions, open newspapers and browse the Internet to follow events unfolding in the Middle East. That

information comes to us from the brave men and women who put their lives on the line to document the bloody insurgencies and revolutions erupting throughout the region. Not only do journalists have to contend with censorship, intimidation and abduction, they are now becoming the deliberate targets of violence. From Baghdad to Damascus and from Tehran to Khartoum, journalists are being beaten, raped, tortured and killed.

Journalism is the public loudspeaker for the brave men and women who have taken to the streets demanding to be heard. Yet, in much of the Middle East their voices and stories are being stifled. By restricting those voices, the Arab States are restricting their ability to develop their societies and improve the lives of their citizens. The scrutiny that goes hand in hand with an independent media is essential to holding Governments accountable to their citizens. Every voice must have the chance to be heard, especially the voices of dissident and marginalized members of society.

In Israel, freedom of the press is woven into the very fabric of our democratic society. As the Council knows, we have no shortage of media outlets that report on every facet of society and very often make demands of our Government and our leaders. Our commitment to the free exchange of ideas has made Israel a destination of choice for many reporters. Journalists in Israel do not have to fear the arbitrary arrests, imprisonment and executions common in the totalitarian States that make up the rest of our region. The very liberties that Israel provides are both a blessing and a curse. While we are immensely proud of our democratic institutions, they often result in the burden of condemnation falling on Israel. After all, foreign journalists would much sooner face news cameras in Tel Aviv than bullets in Damascus or torture in Tehran. Some reporters choose to focus their scrutiny on the Middle East's only real democracy. Rather than risking their safety, they flock to Israel in the knowledge there will be few repercussions and quite possibly a Pulitzer Prize for their efforts.

But despite all the challenges that go hand in hand with an independent media, there is no doubt in my mind that the benefits outweigh the costs. As Thomas Jefferson said, "Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost". Freedom, democracy and tolerance are a heavy burden, and Israel is very proud to carry them. With more reporters and human rights activists per capita than anywhere on the planet, Israel understands that a society cannot truly be free until its citizens have the right to ask questions, challenge the status quo and openly speak their minds.

Democracy, with all its drawbacks, is worth far more than any dehumanizing and destructive dictatorship. Attacks on journalists are not simply attacks on individuals; they are attacks on freedom — on freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Those who try to silence journalists are in fact trying to silence the voices of millions of people whose stories deserve to be told.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the United States delegation for organizing this debate, which covers an area that brings together the right to freedom of expression, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and international humanitarian law, enshrined in the Geneva Conventions. As the Human Rights Council has affirmed, the right to freedom of expression "constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society and one of the basic conditions for its progress and development" (*A/HRC/RES/21/12*). For his part, the Secretary-General has highlighted the crucial role that journalists play in denouncing their own treatment and the suffering of civilians in conflict situations, as well as violations of humanitarian law and human rights. For the first time in a decision by the Security Council, resolution 1738 (2006), adopted on 23 December 2006, on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, considered journalists, media professionals and associated personnel as subject to civilian protection.

Journalists doing their job in situations of armed conflict face the dual problems of insecurity and impunity. Indeed, in 2012 alone, according to the International Federation of Journalists, 121 journalists lost their lives while carrying out their professional functions. The Federation also estimates that only one in 10 cases where journalists are assassinated is investigated.

In accordance with international law, the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians, including journalists and media professionals, rests with the States. That responsibility also falls to non-State actors, such as terrorist groups and criminal organizations. Combating impunity for those who are responsible for war crimes,

genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law continues to be one of the main challenges for the international community in protecting civilians in armed conflict. That includes journalists and professionals in the communications media. From a broader perspective, it becomes necessary, as recommended by Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights, for States to investigate and criminally prosecute crimes committed against the freedom of expression.

My country supports the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, drafted under UNESCO. We believe that Plan of Action should be the cornerstone of a strategy to protect journalists and communications professionals. Of course, we understand that the protection of journalists includes protecting their sources. We also support the work of the Human Rights Council in that regard, which goes beyond armed conflict situations.

The international community has adequate standards for protecting civilian populations and journalists and communications media professionals. Those standards are contained in universal treaties and United Nations resolutions. It is therefore not necessary to develop new international standards. Rather, it is time urgently to move on to an era of implementation of those standards. The Security Council should call for the implementation of those standards. States should implement the standards through legislative and other measures that involve the relevant actors, such as the judiciary, the police and civil society. There is a large space to promote regional and international cooperation to benefit the security and safety of journalists and other communication media professionals.

All of this has one objective, namely, to create an environment that is conducive to journalists and communications media professionals to achieve their valuable mission to report in a safe, independent and timely fashion.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Lithuania.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): Let me thank the United States presidency of the Security Council for the month of July for organizing today's debate. Given the alarming trends regarding journalist deaths in conflict-related zones this is a timely debate, indeed. I would also like thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson for his briefing, and the journalists for their moving testimonies.

In addition to the following comments, Lithuania associates itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union.

We depend on the media to satisfy our right to the freedom of information and freedom of opinion. The work that journalists, media professionals and bloggers do upholding that freedom is fundamental. In conflict zones in particular, they are the world's eyes and ears for countless victims whose suffering and death would otherwise go barely noticed. We should not and must not fail those who are doing this essential work.

Yet, 2012 was the second-worst year on record for journalists, with a 49 per cent increase in deaths from the year 2011. More than half of the victims were killed in situations of which the Security Council is seized. Combat-related crossfire was responsible for more than one-third of journalist fatalities worldwide in 2012, which is about twice the historical average. Internet journalists were hit harder than ever, and the number of freelancer deaths has also surpassed the historical average. Sadly, impunity reigns as far as journalist deaths are concerned. As noted earlier by the Deputy Secretary-General and Ms. Carroll, journalistss killers walk free in nine out of ten cases.

The international community must act in support of the relevant provisions regarding the protection of journalists contained in international humanitarian law. We shouuld also keep in mind that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines intentional attacks against civilians as a war crime. Lithuania calls on all States to ensure the security and safety of civilians, including journalists, to end impunity and to pursue accountability for the crimes committed against civilian populations.

In 2011, as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chair-in-Office, the Lithuanian Foreign Minister brought the issue of the safety and security of journalists to the top of OSCE agenda. As noted by our Chair-in-Office,

> "Physical violence directed at journalists is a gross and fundamental violation of human rights. It is totally unacceptable. Violence against journalists rightfully draws our attention and our anger".

He made those comments as he and the OSCE representative on the freedom of the media spearheaded

the publication of the *OSCE Safety of Journalists Guidebook*. Our experience with the OSCE has strengthened our belief in the importance of regional organizations in addressing media freedom, the safety of journalists and promoting accountability, as regional efforts facilitate translating global commitments into actions on the ground.

My delegation encourages the Council to continue to address the issue of the safety and security of journalists in line with the provisions of resolution 1738 (2006), both in the thematic debates on the protection of civilians and in country-specific situations, as well as through reporting requirements for peacekeeping missions. We would also welcome the inclusion by the Secretary-General of the issue of the protection of journalists in armed conflicts in his regular reports on the protection of civilians and other relevant reports.

In today's world, where millions of civilians are stranded in conflict, threatened, abused and persecuted, and where the world's attention may be their last hope for survival, strengthening the international response to attacks on journalists and tackling impunity for such attacks are essential, as is the lead of the Security Council on the matter.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Mr. Mayr-Harting: I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union and its now 28 member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We thank the presidency for bringing this issue back to the Council after the landmark resolution 1738 (2006). Let me also thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson for his briefing and the journalists for their impressive testimonies.

The year 2012 saw the highest number of journalists killed while carrying out their vital task. The first part of 2013 is very worrying in that regard as well. That situation obliges the international community to reflect on how to best protect journalists in conflict and on how to better use the array of existing legal and political means to that end. This debate should serve as a reminder of the increasingly heavy price paid for information.

We are deeply concerned about the worrying trend of increased violence against journalists, including bloggers and journalistic sources, both in conflict and non-conflict situations, including by non-State actors. The violence includes torture, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention, harassment and the killing of journalists and media workers. We are also alarmed by the restrictions to press freedom and to the use of the Internet and the increasing level of intimidation, violence and censorship that journalists, including bloggers, face in many countries. At the same time, we should also remember that female journalists are more often subject to harassment and sexual violence. We have repeatedly condemned these trends, which must be urgently addressed.

A free, independent and vibrant press is a cornerstone of any democratic society. The freedom of opinion and expression is a fundamental right and an inherent part of human dignity. It is also enshrined in many international and regional human rights instruments.

The freedom of expression also extends to the Internet and any other media. The European Union is firmly opposed to any unjustified or disproportional restrictions of access to its use. The European Union is developing guidelines on the freedom of expression online and offline, including the protection journalists, including bloggers, in order to react coherently and efficiently to violations of the right to freedom of expression.

The European Union is determined to continue standing up for press freedom worldwide. We call on all Governments to promote a safe and enabling environment in which journalists can perform their work independently, without undue interference and without fear of censorship, persecution or prosecution. We also call on States to ensure accountability by investigating attacks against journalists, including bloggers, bringing perpetrators to justice, and providing adequate remedies for victims.

We look forward to the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on good practices regarding the protection of journalists, the prevention of attacks and the fight against impunity for attacks

committed against journalists. Ending impunity would be a very effective measure to guarantee the safety of journalists in the long term.

We call upon all Governments to respect the freedoms and rights of journalists and protect them especially in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict, and call on all parties to armed conflict to respect their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. We further call on all parties to conflict to allow, within the framework of applicable rules and procedures, media access and coverage, as appropriate, in situations of international and non-international armed conflict.

In that context we wish to recall the presidential statement adopted by the Security Council in February, which clearly states that

> "journalists, media professionals and associated personnel engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians and shall be respected and protected as such" (*S/PRST/2013/2*).

We encourage the Secretary-General to continue including the issue of protection of journalists in armed conflict in his reports on the protection of civilians. We also encourage the Security Council to address the protection of journalists in situations of armed conflict, including through public statements, reporting requirements for peacekeeping missions or the Secretariat, and the strengthening of mandates.

It is also important to underline the work of the Human Rights Council, which last September adopted resolution 21/12 on the safety of journalists, as well as that of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNESCO in protecting the freedom of expression and safety of journalists. The United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, led by UNESCO and aiming at greater cooperation among United Nations organizations, is a key document in this debate.

We pay tribute to civil society organizations and journalist networks for their work, highlighting and exposing killings and detentions of and attacks on journalists and press premises. The European Union lends its support to civil society organizations to increase the professional capacities of journalists, provide urgent protection and promote freedom of expression in law and in practice.

Let me finish by expressing the European Union's tribute to and support for all those who fight for the respect of freedom of expression and for free, pluralistic press and other media. The creation of a free and safe environment for journalists will undoubtedly strengthen peace, democracy and development worldwide.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Husain (Canada) (*spoke in French*): We thank the United States for having organized today's debate and the journalists who shared their personal experiences.

Too often, journalists can find themselves in harm's way due to their profession. Today's debate serves to remind us of that reality. Cases involving Canadian journalists include Michelle Lang and Zahra Kazemi. In 2009, Canadian journalist Michelle Lang, of *The Calgary Herald*, was killed by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan alongside four members of the Canadian Armed Forces. In 2003, Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi died as a result of the injuries she sustained while in custody in the Evin Prison in Iran, after having been arrested for taking photos outside that prison in Tehran.

Looking at the current situation in Syria, the Syrian Journalists Association has documented the deaths of 153 professional or citizen journalists since the uprising began. We condemn the intentional targeting of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel, and recall that media equipment and installations constitute civilian assets under international law, as affirmed by resolution 1738 (2006). We must pursue our efforts to bring the perpetrators of such heinous acts to justice. Those who deliberately target civilians must be held to account.

(*spoke in English*)

Each State needs to ensure a safe and enabling environment in which journalists can perform their work independently and without fear of violence. The burden, however, does not rest solely on States, as non-State actors such as terrorist groups and criminal organizations pose an ever-growing threat. Journalists, too, have responsibilities in this regard. They must ensure that they report events without taking

unnecessary risks to themselves or to other civilians. They must be responsible and take safety precautions.

Canada has worked with independent media groups to provide security skills training to journalists so that they can protect themselves. We have also contributed funding towards training Syrian activists and journalists to document violations against media activists in Syria, so that one day the perpetrators of these crimes can be brought to justice. We will continue to work with key partners in an effort to support freedom of expression around the world.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Thallinger (Austria): First, I would like to express Austria's appreciation to the United States for organizing today's thematic debate. By adopting the landmark resolution 1738 (2006), the Security Council recognized the importance of protecting journalists and media professionals in situations of armed conflict. Press freedom and the right to freedom of expression are pillars of democratic societies and the rule of law, and the Council in its own work depends on independent and accurate information from conflict zones.

Although we have witnessed an increase in targeted killings of journalists in recent years, both in conflict situations and in times of peace, the Security Council has not been consistent in addressing these threats. We therefore think that today's debate is very timely and were pleased to hear from the Deputy Secretary-General, as well as from journalists sharing their experiences and ideas. We fully align our remarks with the statement just made on behalf of the European Union.

While Syria has, sadly, been leading the charts of deadliest countries for journalists this year and in 2012, data show that the majority of attacks against journalists take place in situations that cannot be qualified as traditional or typical armed conflict situations. Journalists reporting, for example, on organized crime, corruption, the activities of drug cartels, protests and popular uprisings can easily become targets of assault, arbitrary arrest, harassment or intimidation. It is against that background that Austria has defined the protection of journalists as one of its priorities during its current membership of the Human Rights Council.

Together with a cross-regional group of Member States, we introduced a resolution in the Human Rights Council in September 2012, the objective of which is to ensure accountability for attacks against journalists and to promote a safe and enabling environment in which journalists can work independently. Time and again, impunity for those responsible for attacks has been recognized as the biggest obstacle to the effective protection of journalists. Therefore, we also introduced the issue in the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at the United Nations Office in Vienna earlier this year. We recall that the Security Council has not only reaffirmed its strong opposition to impunity for attacks against civilians, but also underlined its own role in ending it, including in resolution 1894 (2009), on the protection of civilians.

We commend the leadership of UNESCO Director-General Bokova, who consistently advocates for press freedom and calls for the thorough investigation of attacks. Human Rights Council resolution 21/12, adopted by consensus, requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a compilation of good practices in the protection of journalists, the prevention of attacks and the fight against impunity. The compilation will be presented to Member States in September, and Austria will continue its work on the issue in the Human Rights Council.

Let me further highlight the important work done by the United Nations in that field. The elaboration, under UNESCO's leadership, of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity provides an important tool for ensuring the coherence of United Nations measures and will lead to new synergies. At the same time, I would underline the important continuing contribution made in that regard by several of the Human Rights Council's special procedures, and in particular Frank La Rue, who — in his capacity as Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression — has devoted considerable work and attention to journalists, including citizen journalists, and has made a number of interesting recommendations.

We are of the view that the Council could benefit from the expertise and information provided by relevant Special Rapporteurs, such as Frank La Rue, including by inviting them to participate in discussions like today's. The Special Rapporteur has also emphasized the responsibility of news organizations and journalists themselves in enhancing safety, and we note that a number of media organizations have formulated guidelines and useful recommendations to that end.

Last but not least, let me express Austria's hope that the Secretary-General will include more detailed information on the situation of and threats against journalists, both in his next report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, due in November this year, and in country-specific reporting. The provision of timely and accurate information on threats to journalists in conflict situations is an essential prerequisite for the Council to address the topic in a more coherent manner, not only in thematic statements and resolutions but also in country-specific deliberations, including on peacekeeping operations.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Ulibarri (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica attaches great importance to this debate. We thank the United States for convening it, and Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and the four invited journalists for their presentations. The Security Council can derive great benefit from the knowledge and experience of professionals like them and other members of civil society. We urge the Council to strengthen this kind of interaction.

When journalists and other media professionals work in situations of conflict, they not only face the collateral risks arising therefrom, but are increasingly subject to deliberate aggression by the warring parties, be they despotic regimes, sectarian groups, terrorists or the perpetrators of organized crime. Such aggression frequently extends to their information sources and to the integrity and privacy of their communications.

Violence against journalists does not aim solely at impeding their individual ability to exercise the right to freedom of expression that they share with all citizens. The abuse, kidnapping, torture or murder of journalists seeks above all to hinder society from accessing independent information about conflicts or other realities that some may wish to keep hidden. Journalists are also often targeted in a form of revenge designed to make an example of them in order to instil fear in other journalists and in the civilian population as a whole — a perverse method of represson that is both reactive and pre-emptive.

The greater and more complex are the conflicts, the greater is the need for external voices capable of providing serious, rigorous information, led by strong ethical and quality standards. This is the vital social task of professional journalists and media, particularly in situations that, by their very nature, threaten international peace and security. The international community therefore has the responsibility to protect journalists and hold their aggressors accountable. That is why the Security Council should pursue its involvement in this issue. The responsibility also extends to the entire United Nations system and, in particular, to its Member States.

In undertaking this task, we already rely on important support tools. One of the most important such tools is the promotion of respect and achievement of international humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilians in international armed conflicts or internal conflicts. That includes the specific norm of Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 regarding methods of protecting journalists. The Security Council's resolutions on the protection of civilians — particularly resolution 1738 (2006) regarding the protection of journalists — and paragraph 16 of the presidential statement contained in document S/PRST/2013/2, add important guidelines. Additionally, the parameters found in regulations and resolutions relative to the protection of humanitarian assistance personnel should be extended to journalists.

From a more operational perspective, the implementation strategy and national application of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity is of particular importance. We highlight the role of UNESCO in designing and implementing these initiatives.

Furthermore, the international community must strive even harder to develop national capacities to guarantee accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. It must endeavour to improve security and justice, and to consistently recur to international justice when necessary. In addition, a permanent incentive should exist to support the efforts of professional organizations and other civil society entities that promote the protection of journalists, their sources and communications.

Costa Rica is committed to that cause. In line with this commitment, from 2 to 4 May our country hosted UNESCO's celebration of World Press Freedom Day, which included the international conference "Speak without Risk: For the safe exercise of freedom of expression in all media". Today's debate is along the same lines, but there is much more to do, and we should maintain our efforts in order to continue moving forward.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mrs. Anđelić (Bosnia and Heerzegovina): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Madam, for organizing this important and timely debate in order to address issues related to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, with a special emphasis on the protection of journalists. I am also grateful to Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and representatives of media for their briefings.

Bosnia and Herzegovina aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Every single day, the United Nations undertakes very tough and hard work to ensure due protection from the scourge of war. The most desirable approach in situations of conflict would be the peaceful resolution of disputes through diplomatic efforts. Unfortunately, armed conflicts still occur and civilians in those situations still need protection. Today, the United Nations endeavours represent important landmarks in the global efforts to better protect civilians in armed conflicts. We cannot doubt that there is a need for the United Nations, and especially for the Security Council, to further work on improving planning, preparedness and policies aimed at reducing the vulnerability of innocent civilians in conflicts. We would like to reaffirm our commitment to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and to the continuing and full implementation of all relevant resolutions.

The trend of the unlawful targeting of civilians — including women, children, the elderly, humanitarian workers and journalists — is of great concern to us. There is no justification for armed groups to attack civilians. Therefore, we emphasize the responsibility of all parties to conflict to ensure the security of civilians and to comply strictly with the norms of international humanitarian and human rights law.

The protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, including the right to receive and express opinions and impart information, is crucial in all societies. However, journalists and the media have often been subjected to various forms of pressure, blackmail and even physical attacks. It is quite clear that attacks on journalists weaken and endanger the freedom of every citizen.

The fact today is that an increasing number of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel are killed or injured while reporting from conflict situations, even though they are considered to be civilians and should be respected and protected as such. While we express our deep concern regarding this issue, we would like to remind all parties to armed conflicts of their legal obligations with regard to the protection of journalists. Furthermore, it is essential to emphasize the obligation of States to prevent such attacks and the need to bring to justice those responsible. Efforts must be enhanced to support the fight against impunity, at the national and international levels alike.

Sanctions and other targeted measures play an important role in overall efforts as well as in initiatives to improve compliance with the law by non-State armed groups.

Although the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians lies with States, the United Nations plays a crucial role through its systematic approach to the protection of civilians, which is at the forefront of global efforts. We support the provision of more comprehensive and detailed information on the protection of civilians in country-specific situations, as well as on measuring progress in the implementation of peacekeeping mandates related to the protection of all civilians, including journalists.

We need to ensure the protection of the right to the freedom of expression and, at the same time, to punish unethical behaviour by journalists or the media. Unverified or even fabricated information is often used as a weapon in situations of peace and of conflict alike. Bosnia and Herzegovina has experienced the worst effects of hate speech in the past, which was not an issue of freedom of speech, but speech that incited ethnic hatred and killings. In that regard, we are of the view that all journalists have to hold themselves to high ethical standards at all times and under all circumstances. Preventing and fighting against the encouragement, representation or profiling of ethnic, national or religious intolerance, hatred and violence are of vital interest for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We condemn all incitement to violence against civilians in situations of armed conflict. We further reaffirm the need to bring to justice, in accordance with the applicable international law, individuals who incite such violence. Mandating peacekeeping

missions to protect civilians remains one of the most significant actions taken by the Security Council to enhance protection. The United Nations and the Security Council need to indicate their willingness, when authorizing missions on the ground in conflict situations, to consider, where appropriate, steps to respond to all violence against journalists and media professionals. At the same time, it is crucial to consider steps to respond to media broadcasts inciting crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

The objective and impartial work of journalists in armed conflict is, on the one hand, appreciated and necessary, but, on the other hand, it is adversely affected by high risk. We are half way through 2013 and already a significant number of journalists have lost their lives reporting on various conflicts. We must also note that journalist causalities have dramatically risen, making the job of reporting on conflict areas one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. We also believe that today's meeting of the Security Council could provide additional impetus in our efforts to fight for truth and objectivity, to set mechanisms to address the root causes of violence against journalists and to combat impunity.

In conclusion, we pay tribute to all those journalists who have lost their lives carrying out their work for the benefit of all citizens to realize their right to receive reliable information.

The President: There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7003 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

7003rd meeting

Wednesday, 17 July 2013, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. DeLaurentis	(United States of America)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Stancanelli
	Australia	Mr. Lumb
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Sharifov
	China	Mr. Xie Jifeng
	France	Mr. Cabouat
	Guatemala	Ms. Bolaños Pérez
	Luxembourg	Mr. Flies
	Morocco	Ms. Bouhamidi
	Pakistan	Mr. Siddique
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Lee Kyung Chul
	Russian Federation	Ms. Taratukhina
	Rwanda	Ms. Nzeyimana
	Togo	Mrs. Balli
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Jobbins

Agenda

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

Protection of journalists

Letter dated 3 July 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/393)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

13-39773 (E)

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The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Uganda to participate in this meeting.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Seger (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I was recently interviewed by Swiss journalist Patrick Vallélian. The interview would not have taken place if the journalist in question had not been extremely lucky. Indeed, he miraculously survived an incident in Homs last year. If one believes his story, the incident was nothing less than a trap. His French colleague, Gilles Jacquier, however, was killed in the same incident.

That is but one example among many that demonstrate that around the world journalists face threats, assaults, abductions, disappearances and even murder. A worldwide increase in murders and imprisonment of journalists has been noted during the past few years.

Switzerland recalls that journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict are civilians and should not be taken for targets unless they are directly participating in hostilities. We also recall resolution 1738 (2006), which calls on States to prevent attacks on journalists and emphasizes the importance of protective legal instruments such as the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions.

Impunity, often a result of the political impact of the work of journalists, can be seen as one of the major causes of repeated attacks on them. And the media cannot be free if journalists are deliberately targeted or if those who attack them go unpunished.

That is why I thank the United States for organizing today's debate. Without freedom of opinion and expression there can be neither democracy nor good governance. Moreover, during armed conflicts, reliable and independent information is essential for the international community to play its role. The work of journalists can, for example, make an important contribution to gathering information on violations of international law. In that way, representatives of the media play a non-negligible role in preventing such violations and participate in the fight against the impunity of their perpetrators.

As long as journalists continue to be harassed or even killed because of their work, freedom of the media will remain but an empty promise. Not only do journalists have the right to be protected, but the acts of violence against them must be promptly, impartially and effectively investigated.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): At the outset, I would like to express my congratulations to the United States on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

My delegation welcomes the timely convening of today's open debate. We are particularly alarmed that in 2012 alone, 121 journalists were killed and hundreds of others targeted and imprisoned. In fact, Malaysia too lost a journalist in Somalia last year. We are also concerned over reports that journalists were being targeted and killed while covering events in Gaza during Israel's attacks under Operation Pillar of Defense in November 2012, as described in recent testimony to the United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. In 2012, 147 violations against journalists were reported.

Journalists are civilians and must be protected in times of conflict, in accordance with international law. My delegation also agrees that the perpetrators of violence against journalists in conflict situations, such as kidnappings, torture and murder, must be held accountable and brought to justice. There can be no impunity whatsoever.

While recognizing the need to enhance protection for journalists, we must also recognize that journalists are unique. Their uniqueness stems from the nature of their job, which is to report on a particular situation. More often than not, the greater the risk, the higher the demand for the journalist to report on what is taking place on the ground. In general, we can say that the job of a journalist often finds the person in precarious situations. The more danger he or she faces, the more

credible the story is supposed to be. Because of that, the protection of journalists presents a greater challenge, as opposed to protecting other civilians.

Malaysia believes that the main responsibility to protect journalists lies with the States. States are responsible for ensuring the safety of journalists and should accord protection to them in conflict areas to the fullest extent of the law. In that regard, my delegation calls for strict adherence to resolutions 1738 (2006) and 1894 (2009), as well as the relevant international law, including humanitarian and human rights laws, in the protection of civilians.

My delegation shares the views reflected in the 2012 United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, as prepared by UNESCO. We are appalled at the findings that there is an increasing trend of targeted killing of journalists worldwide. We condemn the acts of violence that cost the lives of 372 journalists between 2006 and 2011. Again, Malaysia believes that impunity must end and that the acts of violence committed against civilians, including journalists, must cease. My delegation agrees that the United Nations has an important role to play in combating impunity, as reflected in the Plan of Action. Such measures would include enhancing coordination amongUnited Nations agencies on the ground in addressing the issue of the safety of journalists.

The advancement of information and communications technology could play an important part in improving protection for journalists. We are now accustomed to live visual feeds connected via satellite links from conflict areas which bring home important developments across the globe. The same technology could greatly enhance the safety and security of journalists by allowing them to report on the situation on the ground without actually being close to the conflict zone.

Malaysia neither disputes nor questions the important role of journalists in the dissemination of information in armed conflicts. The protection of journalists requires the involvement of States and the media industry and a better understanding of the role of the journalist. Journalists are a vital tool for supporting economic progress, the development of political consciousness and the intellectual growth of societies. We call on Member States to uphold the highest standards of adherence to international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in order to protect journalists.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Botswana.

Mr. Nkoloi (Botswana): Let me join other delegations in congratulating you and your country, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We sincerely hope we shall be able to support you.

At the outset, let me reiterate the importance that Botswana attaches to the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict. For that reason, we have consistently called on the international community to act in tandem to prevent the systematic and sometimes institutionalized attempts to prevent journalists from conducting their noble profession.

We further believe that there should be growing commitment on the part of the international community to implement the ideals espoused in international human rights law and humanitarian law. Such efforts should be tailored to complement national systems aimed at protecting the human rights of those who are not party to conflict. My delegation welcomes the Security Council's continued focus on this important topic, particularly as it takes place against the backdrop of ongoing and erupting conflicts around the world.

Botswana notes with concern that in their quest to provide the international community with valuable information, journalists often face arbitrary arrests, brutal harassment and even murder.

Journalists are by their nature data collectors, record keepers, information specialists and preservers of knowledge, whether in times of war or in times of peace. Their role is to record events as they unfold, analyse them and share them with the international community or with the public. It is therefore deeply regrettable that, despite calls by the international community to respect the rights of journalists, there are reports of escalating and widespread violations against those working in conflict situations. Such atrocities are often committed by those who perceive journalists not as stakeholders in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, but as irritants and unwelcome witnesses. Thus perpetrators wish journalists could abort their noble mission, primarily because they want their blatant abuse of human rights hidden from the outside world.

It is our conviction that the existing international legal frameworks provide a realistic basis for the protection of journalists in conflict situations. We

therefore call on all warring factions across the world, irrespective of their character and formation, to abide by those normative frameworks.

We also wish to point out that while opposing parties in times of war have a responsibility to ensure the protection of journalists, it however remains the primary responsibility of States to put in place measures to respect and protect journalists. That should be done by enacting and aggressively enforcing laws that punish serious violations of human rights, as set out in the Hague Convention and the Geneva Conventions, as well as in their Additional Protocols.

Having said that, it is our belief that prior to unleashing journalists into conflict zones, media institutions should provide the necessary counselling for journalists to enable them to confront extreme situations. Such counselling should also be provided to their families and other support structures so that they may cope with unfriendly situations.

Botswana calls for cooperation among States, the Security Council and the International Criminal Court (ICC) to hold States accountable for the protection of journalists, whether in times of conflict or in times of peace. The Security Council can also do its part, perhaps more vigorously, in referring all situations that threaten international peace and security to the ICC as the only Court that can open investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Ruiz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo, of the United States of America, as President of the Security Council, for the invitation to participate in this open debate and for giving us an opportunity to share the comments of the Government of Colombia with regard to the protection of journalists.

The Government of Colombia promotes and protects the freedom of the press. As President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón — who is a journalist by profession — has said on several occasions, journalists in Colombia can rest assured that the Colombian Government has arranged all the measures necessary to promote and protect, at all costs, the freedom and independence of their selfless work without exception, to the extent that, as he reaffirmed, criticism from the press, far from antagonizing us, serves to encourage self-evaluation, self-reflection and the continued improvement of the Government.

Colombia shares the concern expressed in various Security Council statements with regard to violence against journalists. Journalists covering armed conflicts exercise the fundamental right of providing citizens with necessary information when crises turn violent, which in turn leads to conflicts and lends even more urgency to journalists' work. In that context, Colombia sees the Security Council's interest in those matters as a contribution to the specialized work being carried out in other forums that have the competence to speak and act on such matters, such as the Human Rights Council, the special rapporteurs and UNESCO.

My country considers it extremely important that the bodies of the United Nations system, in their spheres of competence and in accordance with their mandates under the Charter, be fully familiar with the work of national Governments in the field of the protection of civilians when establishing priorities for their own work and when informing the Organization on the respective situations.

Colombia sees the freedom of speech and of the communications media as a pillar of the democratic system. In that line of thinking, and given the challenges faced in a conflict environment, such as that experienced in Colombia with its many violent factors, the Colombian State decided to afford special treatment to journalists, bearing in mind the threats they could face. That special treatment is based upon article 20 of Colombia's Constitution, which states that every person is guaranteed the freedom to express and disseminate their thoughts and opinions, to inform and receive truthful and impartial information and to establish mass communications media.

In 2010, Colombia also enacted Act 1426, by which it established measures with regard to criminal actions against the rights of legally protected groups of human rights defenders and journalists. More recently, the National Protection Unit was established, under the Ministry of the Interior, to unify the State's frameworks to protect civilians in order to provide security to judges, prosecutors, human rights defenders and journalists, among other vulnerable groups.

With that conviction, the Colombian Government supports and vehemently defends the right to freedom of speech in all its forms. Colombia believes that the important role played by the United Nations to

identify national deficiencies and challenges should be accompanied by a recognition of the progress achieved in each country.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Greece.

Mr. Spinellis (Greece): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative to organize this important debate. I also welcome the remarks made by the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Eliasson, on the issue.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Endangering or taking the life of journalists is an extreme form of censorship, not only because it silences one voice, but because it aims, and usually succeeds, at intimidating others. It therefore remains a highly problematic issue. According to reports and live testimonies by journalists and the representatives of non-governmental organizations who are in the Chamber with us today, the number of journalists or press operatives killed, kidnapped, wounded or threatened while carrying out their professional duties remains alarmingly high.

In most cases, the root cause of the targeting of journalists remains the fact that they report on unsettling truths and expose crimes, the perpetrators of which — whether political autocrats, criminal organizations or terrorist groups — have something to lose when a journalist brings their illegal actions into the forefront. States do indeed have the instruments necessary to protect journalists in armed conflicts. Both resolution 1738 (2006) and the Fourth Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol I contain unequivocal provisions on the obligation to protect media professionals reporting in dangerous situations.

More recently, a third tool has been added — the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which is a comprehensive and practical approach to the issues of the safety of journalists and impunity. Strong support for the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, as well as for the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, is essential to ensuring full implementation of the principles and objectives of the Plan of Action. And enhancing the United Nations reporting mechanism is essential to the effective protection of journalists.

Combating impunity will undoubtedly reduce the unusually high numbers of deaths, abductions and detentions. Insufficient investigation, too few convictions and simple impunity perpetuate the cycle of violence against journalists. The problem of impunity is not limited to failure to investigate murders of journalists, but also directly targets freedom of expression. Curtailing journalists' freedom of expression deprives society as a whole of their contribution and damages press freedom even more, since a climate of fear results in self-censorship. States must ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes are brought to justice and punished for their actions.

Beyond that of States, the role of civil society in the protection of journalists is crucial. Several non-governmental organizations are dedicated to combating attacks on journalists and preventing violence against them. Greece attaches great importance to the issue of the protection of journalists and the fight against impunity. To that end, and in cooperation with UNESCO and Costa Rica, on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day in May we organized a side event on the protection of journalists for the second consecutive year. Freedom of expression is a fundamental right, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and one that should be universally guaranteed. Journalists and media professionals are the main actors in the process of the delivery of news and information.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Sarkowicz (Poland): I would like to begin, Mr. President, by thanking you and the delegation of the United States for your initiative in organizing this important debate on the safety of journalists. Poland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union on behalf of its member States.

Let me add just a few remarks. Freedom of expression is a cornerstone of democratic societies. It is crucial to the promotion of the rule of law, democracy and good governance. Although affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, it is being violated as we speak, often because the safety of journalists, who seek, receive and transmit information, is in danger.

Press and media coverage is beneficial to all. Journalists play a key role in the democratic process; they are the eyes and voices of civil society. They are a check on Governments and monitor those Governments' deliverables. Citizen journalism has contributed greatly to the political changes in Tunisia and Libya. Journalism still gives hope to people who struggle under undemocratic regimes, and it alerts the international community.

The protection of journalists should cover all news providers, professional and non-professional, as well as journalists' sources, and should exist in time of peace as well as conflict. Recognizing the importance of freedom of expression for the process of democratization and journalists' key role in it, Poland has consistently raised the issue of journalists' safety on the international stage. We support activities that promote freedom of expression and raise awareness of the significance of a free media environment. In an effort to share our experience from our own transition period, we organize lessons-learned workshops on democracy for journalists, one of which was held in Myanmar last year. Since 2011, we have organized, with Poland's Reporters Foundation, the Eastern Partnership Journalism Prize contest, which sends a clear signal that journalists' work is appreciated and noticed.

We are happy that 2012 bore so much fruit in the form of commitments aimed at strengthening the safety of journalists. The United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, the guidebook on the subject issued by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and, lastly, the Human Rights Council's resolution 21/12 on the safety of journalists have been very useful.

Poland continues to work on international standards and on further improving guarantees of reporters' safety. In April of this year the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the embassies of Austria and Switzerland, organized an international conference in Warsaw on the safety of journalists. Among the participants were representatives of the State, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and UNESCO, along with journalists and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Participants discussed specific recommendations and exchanged views on the legal framework for the protection of journalists, the security of investigative journalists and best practices. The recommendations were subsequently submitted to the Human Rights Council, UNESCO, and the OSCE and yesterday were also sent to every United Nations mission in New York.

The challenge here is to further promote and enhance respect for international standards in this area. Journalists should be protected from threats to their security. More must be done to address the root causes of violence against them. Preventive mechanisms must be discussed and formulated. We should not hesitate to ask questions about the most serious threats to the safety of journalists, the existence of common threat patterns, successful solutions and how we can ensure respect for international obligations. And we should do our utmost to find the answers.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Schaper (Netherlands): I would like to begin by aligning myself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

Journalists, including bloggers, are still all too often the targets of aggression, harassment, arbitrary detention and even extrajudicial killings. The adoption of resolution 1738 (2006), though an important step, has not put an end to attacks on reporters, so more must be done. This open debate will be instrumental to that, in our view, and I would therefore like to thank you, Mr. President, and through you to commend the United States delegation for organizing this important event.

The role of journalists before, during and after conflict is indispensable. The very fact that they are intentionally being targeted testifies to that. The media play an important role in preventing conflict by ensuring that their reporting separates facts and tangible realities from assumptions and spin. And after a conflict has broken out, the media also have a responsibility to provide a reliable account of what is really going on. Their stories and images show what is actually happening, which can help a community to understand the conflict that is taking place. Real insight may also help to generate international commitment to conflict resolution.

Resolution 1738 (2006) summed it up well. Intentional acts of violence against journalists are unacceptable and should be condemned and prosecuted by the authorities, because attacks on the media have the sole and illegitimate purpose of curtailing freedom of expression, and through that the people's voices. And we need more voices to be heard, not fewer. Thanks

to the advent of the Internet, that is exactly what is currently happening. Everyone can now reach large audiences with their story or footage. Citizen journalism has become an important source of information during conflict and real-time images often have enormous impact, which also makes them an attractive instrument for manipulation for some.

The Netherlands has therefore decided to encourage new forms of journalism and to contribute to the protection of its messengers. We provide such encouragement by financially supporting the development of the StoryMaker application. This application enables citizen and professional journalists in conflict areas to immediately tell and share their stories by mobile phone with millions of people around the world without endangering their online privacy and security. The application also includes an interactive training guide on independent and safe reporting. It is available for free and can be downloaded through www.storymaker.cc.

We are promoting our second priority, protection, by establishing the Freedom Online Coalition. This cross-regional coalition, now numbering 21 countries, was set up in 2011 and is committed to respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms offline and online alike. As a part of that, several members of the Freedom Online Coalition have set up the Digital Defenders Partnership to promote innovative solutions in keeping access to the Internet open. The Partnership is also used to support journalists, bloggers and cyberactivists who find themselves under attack and to facilitate deployment of emergency Internet access in countries where the Internet is not accessible.

These are just two examples of concrete action to protect the freedom of expression and its messengers. But more still needs to be done. The Netherlands looks forward to collaborating with the members of the Council to ensure better protection for the courageous journalists who help to ensure that the truth is not the first casualty in conflict situations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to thank Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo for the initiative to convene this very important meeting. Impartial media work plays an important role in increasing the understanding among peoples and nations, and it is of great importance for humankind.

Today, an armed group killed Mr. Mohammad Jamous in southern Lebanon as he was returning home. He was accompanied by his 17 year-old daughter. This armed terrorist group is receiving military and financial support from States and Governments that are assisting terrorist groups in my country. Lamentably, this honourable man died even as we participate in this very important meeting.

The Syrian Government has been working to treat the media openly throughout the events occurring in Syria. We have adopted a reformed media law to promote the work of the media and guarantee greater freedom and transparency. The Syrian Government is working to ensure that the truth and facts emerge. We worked with United Nations Special Envoy Kofi Annan to establish his six-point plan, including its fifth point on media access and work. The Syrian Government periodically gave Mr. Annan a list of the names of journalists who have access to Syria. Those journalists numbered 160 in the Arab and foreign media, from 25 March 2012 to 21 April 2013. According to the Ministry of Information, access has been given to 300 members of the media from around the world, and we have enabled all of them to work freely.

The Syrian Government attaches particular importance to the security and safety of journalists. We have urged them not to enter Syrian territory illegally, as that would expose them to danger. We have also urged them to avoid areas where armed terrorist groups, including Al-Nusra, gather.

Unfortunately, terrorist groups have targeted foreign journalists as well as Syrians. They have been killed, assassinated and abducted. Mr. Richard Engel, for instance, was himself abducted by a terrorist group. We had hoped that Mr. Engel would reveal the identity of those hostage-takers, which might have helped the Council to understand in greater detail what is happening in Syria. Two French journalists are still being held captive by terrorist groups. Unfortunately, we have lost other journalists, including Gilles Jacquier, who was assassinated by terrorist groups.

The Syrian Government has striven to cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross in seeking to ensure the freedom of these abducted journalists, as well as the return to their home countries of the remains of journalists who have been killed.

Some journalists are infiltrating Syrian territory through common borders with neighbouring countries. This is illegal and is being carried out with terrorist assistance. Accordingly, some of those journalists have been exposed to danger or have been arrested then freed to return home. On behalf of my Government, I have sent official letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council containing information about some journalists who have illegally entered Syrian territory. In those letters, we confirm that those journalists alone bear the legal responsibility for any consequences ensuing from their illegal accessing of Syrian territory.

Some Governments are seeking to promote their geopolitical objectives, destroy the Syrian State and undermine its infrastructure and national institutions. A vigorous media campaign has been mobilized to incite violence and terrorist, spread lies, distort the situation and fuel divisions within Syria. This is a flagrant violation of resolution 1624 (2005). The Council cannot be unaware that that resolution was adopted with the aim of ending incitement to terrorism.

In that context, Syrian media were placed on a targeted list in an effort to muzzle them. Journalists and media professionals have been threatened to prevent them from carrying out their task of disseminating the truth. When those efforts failed, some media officials were abducted and assassinated. Furthermore, a number media institutions were the targets of terrorist attacks and destroyed, including the offices of a satellite channel, which were attacked on 27 June 2012, their premises looted, four security guards killed and three journalists executed in cold blood. Other buildings were targeted on 6 August 2012 with explosives.

We arrested the perpetrator of that terrorist attack, who has admitted that he received his instructions from Saudi Arabia. The toll of the attack was nine journalists killed. Twenty-three Syrian and 39 foreign journalists have been abducted by a terrorist group.

This media war has not stopped there. It has been carried on by an embargo imposed on the Syrian media through a resolution adopted by the League of Arab States on 2 June 2012 to stop the broadcasting of certain satellite channels on Nilesat, Arabsat, and the European Hotbird channel.

Despite the ferocious campaign against Syria, many courageous, honourable and professional journalists have contributed to raising public awareness of the reality of the situation in Syria and exposed terrorist attacks perpetrated by extremist groups, including foreign extremists and mercenaries who came to Syria to spread chaos and destruction at the behest of certain countries that are known to all.

The Taliban movement in Pakistan has announced that hundreds of these elements have participated in clashes against Syrian forces at the request of so-called Arab friends, who have also provided help in Afghanistan. Many honourable journalists have taken noble positions and have resigned from the chain that is promoting division and inciting hatred and carnage in Syria, Egypt and in other countries. These resignations have played a very important role in revealing the destructive approach adopted by some media that have failed to respect the values and objectives of noble media workers.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Mukerji (India): I should like to thank the United States presidency for organizing this debate on the protection of journalists in conflict situations under the theme of the protection of civilians. I should also like to thank the presidency for the concept paper on the subject (S/2013/393, annex). We have benefited greatly from the briefings given today by the Deputy Secretary-General and other briefers.

Before making our observations on this subject, we would reiterate India's consistent view that the protection of journalists in all situations is the foremost responsibility of every State. In India, articles 19 and 21 of our Constitution guarantee the right to life, personal liberty, freedom of speech and expression. Such constitutional rights are of fundamental importance in any democratic society. Journalists play a crucial role in ensuring that citizens exercise these rights in reality. As the world's most populous democracy, India is committed to the protection of these rights for all its citizens, including journalists.

Our ingrained awareness of these rights is an integral part of our participation in the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations, to which India has been the largest contributor. Indian United Nations peacekeepers have helped to restore peace and security in conflict situations around the globe and thereby facilitated the creation of an environment conducive to the exercise of the right to freedom of speech and expression.

Since 1950, India has adhered to and fully supported the Geneva Conventions. We also recall the Council's demand in resolution 1738 (2006) that all parties to armed conflict comply fully with the obligations applicable to them under international law related to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including journalists, media professionals and associated personnel. Such compliance is necessary not only for access to information, but also for the resolution of conflict situations and for post-conflict peacebuilding.

While discussing best practices for protecting journalists in conflict situations, we would recommend certain basic precautions. These recommendations are meant to put in context issues of access and security in conflict situations. First and foremost, journalists should function within the relevant domestic laws of the countries concerned so that they have full recourse to the protection afforded by such laws to them. Secondly, their access to conflict zones should be secured in a legal manner. Thirdly, they should maintain strict neutrality and impartiality and not become a party to the conflict. When journalists follow such precautions, it will become easier for States to protect them, facilitate their professional work, and ensure that they become a catalyst for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. For their part, national Governments must come together and pledge to provide protection to journalists in conflict situations, especially where their whereabouts and coordinates have been provided in advance.

We have witnessed the tremendous dynamism and professionalism of journalists in reporting from conflict situations. Many journalists, including women, have performed their professional duties at grave personal risk. The protection that these journalists have received from responsive mechanisms, established by States under the rule of law, demonstrates the need to further support the development of such mechanisms. The efforts of the Council and of the international community must be directed at assisting national authorities in augmenting such mechanisms, and in generating greater awareness of these issues. That is the most sustainable method for sovereign Governments to discharge their responsibility to protect journalists in conflict situations.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Senegal.

Mr. Diallo (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The protection of civilians in armed conflict, including journalists, is undoubtedly a subject of major importance. I therefore welcome the inspired decision of the United States presidency to bring this issue to our attention in order to further spur salutary action to better protect rights and freedoms throughout the world.

First, I should like to congratulate the United States presidency on its excellent conduct of the Security Council's work in July, and reiterate my delegation's ongoing readiness to support it in the discharge of its responsibilities. I should also like to express my full gratitude to Mr. Jan Eliasson for his briefing today and to all those who kindly agreed to share with us their views and experiences on this topic.

The protection of journalists in armed conflicts is an increasingly pressing issue, according to the 2012 report of the UNESCO Director-General, Ms. Irina Bakova. Indeed, with 600 deaths over the past decade, including 121 in 2012 alone, the situation of journalists, staff and freelance alike, is going from bad to worse. Media professionals continue to be subject to the most unacceptable treatment, such as abductions, intimidation, illegal arrests, harassment or rape, in flagrant violation of article 79 of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. I therefore take this opportunity to pay a strong tribute to all those martyrs whose sacrifices attest to the importance of our responsibility.

The international community's response to such practices should be commensurate with the threat they represent to international security and to fundamental freedoms. Media professionals play a crucial role in bringing the truth to light in times of armed conflict. They make a considerable contribution to raising awareness among the international community about the full extent of the security situation and the underlying causes of insecurity.

Whatever the nature, sensitivity and issues at stake, the information that is relayed and dealt with by the press cannot excuse the reprisals that take place, often going as far as killings. We must therefore establish an inclusive approach to strengthen protection for press workers and, above all, to ensure accountability for perpetrators of such abuses or those who provoke them. Such persons must be identified and punished with the full force of the law. I am pleased in this regard to commend the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity,

which is aimed at ensuring the ideal of a free and safe environment for media workers.

The Plan of Action's relevance resides in its vision of the role of the press in maintaining global peace and the modus operandi that should lead to achieving it through the invaluable contribution of United Nations agencies, Member States and non-governmental organizations. We are therefore pleased to note that the Plan of Action promotes the strengthening of the mechanisms of the United Nations system, cooperation with States, the development of partnerships with other international institutions and organizations, including non-governmental organizations, and awareness-raising in order to end the targeting of journalists.

This mission is of course very complex, given the risks facing journalism in times of conflict, but we must make this noble fight a priority concern. With that in mind, we should help Governments in need to establish the legal and institutional instruments that will enable them to pursue perpetrators of acts of violence against journalists. Such cooperation with Governments is all the more important in that, as the report of the UNESCO Director-General shows, out of the 29 countries on the 2009-2010 list of murdered journalists, only 18 responded to UNESCO's call. The report also informs us of the low rate of convictions. Only nine cases out of 245 killings perpetrated between 2006 and 2009 led to convictions and punishment.

This range of measures to strengthen security for journalists should also include the cooperation of media professionals to prevent or limit the dangers they face. It should be fully understood that my delegation in no way advocates self-censorship; this is simply a question of not uselessly inviting what could be perceived in a difficult situation as a provocation without compromising fundamental tenets. I welcome the drafting of a charter on security for journalists in areas of conflict where they are working in areas of war.

The Security Council should also strengthen action to protect journalists in conformity with the spirit of resolution 1738 (2006). In this context, it would be useful to provide United Nations peacekeeping missions with the necessary human, technical and legal capacities to protect journalists.

Lastly, I should like to encourage the Council in the dynamic already under way, which requires the international community as a whole to take decisive action commensurate with the challenge that journalists face in times of conflict. I therefore reiterate my country's commitment to contributing to freedom of information, including in times of conflict.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Červenka (Czech Republic): Let me start by thanking the United States presidency for scheduling this important debate, Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson for his dedication to the protection of journalists, and the media representatives for their moving briefings. The Czech Republic aligns itself with the earlier statement made by the European Union.

Journalists and other media workers play an essential role in informing the public and the international community about current events, both in conflict and in non-conflict situations. The Czech Republic is therefore deeply worried about continuing restrictions of free expression and independent journalism by State and non-State actors in some countries, as well as by escalating trends of harassment, arrests, torture and the persecution of journalists worldwide.

The protection of journalists in armed conflict is of vital importance in order to ensure their safety as well as the freedom of information. We therefore highly value the recent efforts of the Human Rights Council in this regard, especially the adoption of resolution 21/12 on the safety of journalists in September 2012, which the Czech Republic co-sponsored. Furthermore, we commend the progress achieved by UNESCO and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in this area.

In recent years, we have witnessed unprecedented violence against journalists in some countries, especially in the Middle East and northern Africa. By the end of 2012, attacks on journalists in these countries escalated significantly, making Syria in particular one of the most dangerous places in the world. Unfortunately, this negative trend continues in 2013. Violent attacks on journalists indicate a serious deterioration of the freedom of expression in the region and highlight violations of the right to publish and exchange information and views.

In this context, the Czech Republic believes that it is absolutely crucial for United Nations Member States to respect and ensure respect for the applicable rules of the international humanitarian law on the protection of

journalists. Article 79, the key provision of Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, clearly sets out that journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians, and that they shall be protected. The Council itself unanimously stressed this principle in its landmark resolution 1738 (2006), recently recalled in the presidential statement of 12 February (S/PRST/2013/2).

In conclusion, the Czech Republic would like to take this opportunity to recognize, honour, and underscore the essential role of independent media and civil society in protecting freedom of expression and democratic principles. I should like to pay tribute to the work of all fearless journalists who dedicate their lives, sometimes at great personal cost, to this cause. We would like to express our solidarity with all those who have lost their lives in the fight for freedom of expression and the promotion of democracy in the world.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Ms. Burgstaller (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden. At the outset, I should like to thank the United States for taking the initiative to hold an open debate on the protection of journalists in armed conflict. I should also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his briefing and the distinguished journalists for sharing their valuable insights and experiences with us today.

The Nordic countries greatly value the crucial role of journalists in enhancing the international community's understanding of conflict areas, and we are deeply committed to the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, including the protection of journalists. The work of journalists in armed conflict — witnessing and reporting on violations and abuses of human rights and violations of humanitarian law — is in the international public interest. The presence of journalists often helps to prevent atrocities being committed. Yet, many journalists and media workers are persecuted during armed conflicts precisely because of their work. It is often said that truth is the first casualty of war; this sometimes translates into a deliberate targeting of journalists.

In light of the worsening situation over the past decade, the Nordic countries very much welcome the creation of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, led by UNESCO and aiming at securing greater cooperation among United Nations organizations, Member States and other stakeholders in supporting the creation of a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers in conflict and non-conflict situations. We particularly appreciate the United Nations Plan's concrete implementation strategy for the global and national levels.

The increasing violence across the world against journalists undermines the very foundation of open and democratic societies in which freedom of expression is a cornerstone. The Nordic countries welcome the first resolution on the safety of journalists adopted by the Human Rights Council in September 2012 (resolution 21/12).

Many different forms of media play a key role in the exercise, promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Journalists, like everyone else, are entitled to the same rights online as they have offline, as affirmed by the Human Rights Council in its landmark resolution 20/8, "The promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet", adopted in July 2012.

We, the international community, must demand and ensure that the protection under international humanitarian law given to journalists, as recognized war correspondents and as civilians, is fully respected and upheld. The Security Council must be clear and strong in its messages and resolutions that violations against civilians and journalists cannot be tolerated. We, the international community, must also put pressure on those who fail to respect the basic yet vital rules that apply. Journalists also play a crucial role in witnessing, gathering information, and reporting on violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. This is an essential element in ensuring that such crimes do not go unpunished.

Neither should crimes against journalists themselves go unpunished. Promoting the safety of journalists and fighting impunity requires preventive actions to address the causes of violence against journalists and impunity. This encompasses the need to deal with issues such as corruption, organized crime and an effective framework for the rule of law.

At the thirty-first International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2011, the States parties agreed in a resolution on a four-year action plan to enhance the protection of journalists and the

role of media workers. We must report on progress at the next Conference in 2015. Education is also needed in preventative actions and to underline causes of violence against journalists. For this purpose, we have a common responsibility to educate our armed forces on the protection of civilians and journalists under international humanitarian law and human rights law, and we must make sure that crimes against them are brought to justice.

The Nordic countries support a range of initiatives that are relevant to the topic of today's debate. Let me mention just a few. Norway, in partnership with Argentina, Austria, Indonesia and Uganda, has led a series of regional conferences on the theme "Reclaiming the protection of civilians under international humanitarian law". At the final global conference held in May this year, the protection of journalists was specifically underlined in the co-Chairs' recommendations.

The Swedish Folke Bernadotte Academy and the Swedish National Defence College have produced a handbook on assisting international criminal investigations with very hands-on information to all those — including journalists — who are present in conflict environments on how to correctly identify, gather and forward information on possible international crimes to international criminal courts and tribunals.

UNESCO and Reporters Without Borders have developed a practical guide for journalists in conflict zones. Sweden, together with the Swedish Reporters Without Borders, is in the process of translating this handbook to ensure its wider distribution.

In closing, this debate today has underscored the difficult circumstances under which journalists operate, while providing the international community with vital information from conflict areas. It is our common responsibility to make sure that they can play this indispensable role without risking their own lives.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the United States presidency for convening this debate on the security of journalists in armed conflict. To me personally as a professional journalist, this subject is of particular interest, as it is for my country, which is a champion of the right of access by all to truthful, timely and verified information.

It is important to note the duty of States to protect all their citizens in any situation that puts their lives at risk as a result of criminal and delinquent activities. This protection should be for all, regardless of condition or profession. We must, however, be careful not to consider that every murder of an individual who happens to be a journalist is necessarily an infringement of the freedom of expression when in reality it may simply be a case of common crime. In every circumstance, Ecuador calls on all States not to allow the killing of journalists to go unpunished.

The specific theme of today's debate is the protection of journalists in armed conflict. This protection is defined, first and foremost, as that which international humanitarian law grants to civilians in cases of armed conflict. In that context, Ecuador condemns the deaths of all civilians and non-combatants — most certainly including journalists — as a result of collateral damage in actions not directed against military objectives, as defined by the laws of war, or in extrajudicial executions, which are illegal under international law and may even be carried these days using remote-controlled means that do not distinguish between armed combatants and civilian populations, including journalists, who must be protected in all circumstances.

A second element underpinning the need to protect journalists in armed conflicts is the right of society to have access to truthful information, and its corresponding right, that of freedom of expression. The presence of journalists in the midst of armed conflicts has helped societies to better understand the horrors of war and clearly understand who are the true aggressors and who are the people exercising their right to self-defence and self-determination.

This role of a committed, independent and truthful journalist must be protected. However, we believe it necessary to reflect on the situation of those who, in the exercise of journalistic activities, are really more the agents of propaganda, even if involuntary, of one of the Powers in conflict when they are embedded in military units that are subject to censorship behind which war crimes are often hidden. There are ethical and ontological considerations in that regard that should not be overlooked in this debate.

As on other occasions, my delegation reiterates its appeal for respect for the basic mandates of the various United Nations bodies in order to avoid ineffective duplication of effort and, above all, distortions from the

appropriate treatment that these issues deserve. While we value the attention that the Council and UNESCO are now giving to the safety of journalists, we believe that it is up to the Human Rights Council specifically, and its Special Rapporteur in general, to address the issue of journalists' safety, in particular because of the valuable tools at its disposal, including its emergency appeals and its universal periodic review mechanism.

In our view, the ever-present risk of politicizing matters related to the protection of human rights, in this case for journalists, by taking them to bodies that are eminently political, as is undoubtedly the case of the Security Council, weakens the necessary message of complete and total respect of the human rights of all human beings. At least this is our reading and our understanding; of course, there are many others. Who knows how many other readings there may be? A number of opinions have been expressed on this very same issue, and from this diversity everyone will draw their own conclusions.

That brings us to an issue that should be key and ineluctable — context. Journalists have died in my country. There were recently two disturbing cases in Ecuador. The first one, this year, involving Fausto Baldiveso, is currently being investigated. My country's prosecutor and police have detained seven suspects to date, all of whom have been linked to usury and drug trafficking in the past. The other case, of 2012, involves Juan Antonio Serrano Selgado, the brother of Ecuador's Minister of the Interior, a photojournalist who was murdered by a group of young people who had been taking drugs. According to the investigations to date, neither of those two unfortunate cases are linked to the journalistic lives of those citizens. When Ms. Kathleen Carroll read out this morning a list of countries — an incomplete one at that, without context or qualification — she was undertaking a perverse exercise that belied a lack of serious and honest journalism. At a time when that is what we are seeking today, it seems that when haste is placed before rigour, the result is politicization.

In conclusion, I cannot fail to mention that the type of indiscriminate electronic monitoring that the world's citizens have experienced in recent weeks can also jeopardize the lives of journalists and their sources, especially in situations of armed conflict. As an associated State of the Common Market of the South, Ecuador endorses the comments of the Permanent Representative of Brazil this morning with regard to the need to adopt multilateral rules governing the Internet, in order to ensure the protection communications, the privacy of individuals and respect for the sovereignty of States.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Escalona Ojeda (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank you very much, Mr. President, for having organizing this important meeting. We would also like to pay tribute to all journalists who have lost their lives in the context of the circumstances mentioned in the invitation to this meeting.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela hopes and is working for a world of peace free of violence, which is the only real way to avoid such tragic events, So long as war persists, we will continue to regret such events. We are therefore working towards a world of justice and peace, both of which are mutually reinforcing. We need such a world so that we need not regret not just the killing of journalists, but also the loss of so many innocent lives. All death is regrettable. My statement is aimed primarily at finding ways of ensuring peace.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its support for the need to protect civilians in armed conflict, including journalists and all media personnnel. We also reiterate that responsibility to protect lies primarily with sovereign States, which need to abide by international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The best way to protect civilians, including journalists and media personnel, is through diplomacy and dialogue, not by using force. It is also the best way to attain peace. We must strive to protect civilians in armed conflict without resorting to the use of force. In that regard, the role of the United Nations must be to serve as an honest, objective, neutral and impartial mediator between the parties to a conflict, paving the path for a durable, peaceful solution. That is the only way not just to avoid the loss of innocent lives, but any loss of life. Peacekeeping operations must focus on using their political influence and their role of providing comprehensive support for parties to a conflict in the search for a peaceful solution. Peacekeeping operations must be a part of political solutions to conflicts, not an alternative to them.

In that connection, my delegation expresses its concern at the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2098 (2013), last March, which refers to the establishment of an intervention brigade responsible for neutralizing certain armed groups and reducing the threat they pose to the authority of the State and to security in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, thereby creating some scope for stabilization activities. Venezuela stands by the Government and people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also recognize the imminent need to protect civilians affected by the conflict, and we reject the atrocities committed by certain armed groups. However, we also fear that the establishment of that intervention brigade might set a negative precedent for how peacekeeping operations are carried out. For the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, it is important to emphatically reiterate that the establishment of the brigade cannot and must not, under any circumstances, set a precedent for how the Council conducts itself.

We are also deeply concerned that unmanned aerial systems — drones — are being used in the context of peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While such aircraft are currently being used to protect civilians, United Nations staff and facilities, we have very few assurances that in the near future they will not be used as instruments of war. Judging by the establishment of the intervention brigade, the trend seems to be that the protection of civilians justifies anything.

Before I conclude, I would like to clarify that when we speak of journalists and media personnel we are not just referring to the reporters and columnists of the major media conglomerates. We are also referring to all of those who from their communities or places of work reveal to the their societies and the world at large the abuses and violations that are taking place on a day to day basis.

Let us not forget to mention that, on more than a few ocassions, some information outlets appear to act as instruments for inciting violence and war. We should therefore take note of the fact that such networks are also responsible for the deaths of journalists in armed conflict; for, whether deliberately or not, they expose them to dangers for which they are not prepared.

This is therefore about journalists in general, working within their own communities and workplaces. With all due respect to them, however, reporting is not carried out just by them. We are also speaking about people such as Julian Assange and Edward Snowden, who, acting for truth and justice, while putting their lives in danger, have exposed the enormous reach of one of the greatest threats to international peace and security: cyberwar. Those reporters also deserve the protection of the international community.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for her leadership in convening this open debate. I would also express my appreciation for the valuable briefings given by His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, DeputySecretary-General, Mr. Richard Engel of NBC News, Ms. Kathleen Carroll of the Associated Press and the Committee to Protect Journalists, Mr. Mustafa Haji Abdinur of AFP and Mr. Ghaith Abdul-Ahad of The Guardian.

In 2012, the number of journalists killed globally was tragically high, totalling more than 120, a number that includes several Japanese journalists. We would like to express our sincere condolences for those who have fallen in the course of their efforts to investigate and deliver facts to all the world's people. Against that backdrop, it is both timely and meaningful that the Security Council is holding an open debate focused on the protection of journalists. It is especially important that the Council, which is responsible for international peace and security, hear directly the views of journalists who have worked in the field and who have broad experience covering active conflicts in the face of grave personal danger.

Attacks against journalists are assaults against freedom of expression. As pointed out in the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, without freedom of expression, and particularly freedom of the press, an informed, active and engaged citizenry is impossible. In particular, without the courageous actions of journalists, the world would not know about the suffering of people during ongoing conflicts, when numerous human rights abuses and humanitarian crises occur. Protecting journalists means shedding light on suffering, informing people of the truth and contributing to improving the situation. In other words, journalists are not only defenders of freedom of expression; they also play a significant role in consolidating democracy through their reporting and contributions to the advancement of human rights.

The Geneva Conventions constitute the first legal framework for protecting journalists, one that was further developed through the adoption of resolution 1738 (2006) and the Plan of Action I just mentioned. However, we still face challenges in implementing those frameworks.

In particular, the fight against impunity, especially in terms of prevention, is of critical importance. In cases when Japanese journalists have died or been killed, the Government of Japan has requested the countries concerned to provide detailed information on each incident, and it expects justice to be done. Japan both commends and emphasizes the importance of efforts to document instances of the killing of journalists, to monitor Government responses to such acts and to publicize the outcomes, including activities undertaken by the Committee to Protect Journalists and UNESCO.

Resolution 1738 (2006) clarifies the issue of protecting journalists. However, the security conditions for journalists have yet to improve. Furthermore, we should remember that many non-conflict related cases also exist where journalists are in grave danger. The Security Council should find ways to prevent journalists from falling prey to tragic situations and further encourage good practices.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Pyvovarov (Ukraine): I would like to thank the delegation of the United States for organizing today's meeting of the Security Council, which is devoted to the important issue of protecting journalists in armed conflicts.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

We express our gratitude to Mr. Eliasson for his comprehensive briefing, as well as to the representatives from the leading media entities present here today.

No one doubts that today information directly impact the key global political processes. Over the past two years, the world witnessed a steady increase in the number of journalists killed or injured while performing their professional duties. Unfortunately, a key reason for that unacceptable situation is the increase in zones of instability, inadequate international legal mechanisms to protect journalists, the impunity of those committing crimes, the creation of obstacles to journalists' professional activities, and the state of global information campaigns.

The events of the Arab Spring, especially in Syria, and the alarming news from other countries in the region demonstrate the true price we pay for being informed of the real situation inside conflict zones. While ordinary people try to escape and save themselves from chaos and bloodshed, journalists, in contrast, attempt to reach such areas in order to provide us with the latest news. Unfortunately, their courage and professionalism sometimes cost them their lives or their health.

I would like to recall that, thanks to a successful escape attempt a few months ago, the Ukrainian journalist Anhar Kochnyeva was able to return home from captivity in Syria, where she had spent almost six months. Over the past 10 years, more than 20 Ukrainian journalists have died while performing their duties in the line of fire.

That is why, in our view, today's debate should answer the question of how the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, can contribute more effectively to protecting journalists from violence and safeguarding them from danger when working in conflict zones.

Strengthening the freedom of expression and developing a solid framework of international humanitarian law, one that would guarantee journalists the right to work in an environment free from fear of persecution and aggression, is one of the main priorities of Ukraine's 2013 chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and of its vice-presidency of the United Nations Committee on Information.

Ukraine believes that free, independent, responsible and professional journalism is the basis for a modern, democratic civil society. Our country supports all international mechanisms aimed at strengthening the global protection of journalists throughout the world, in particular those promoted by the Human Rights Council. We supported the resolution adopted by the Council in September 2012 to improve the situation in this domain. Ukraine is also actively engaged in UNESCO's work to strengthen the intergovernmental response to violent and aggressive acts against journalists working in high-risk areas and danger zones.

My country strongly supports the full implementation of the principles set out in the United

Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. We consider it an important document in the global fight against the impunity of persons and criminal entities that threaten media personnel directly in conflict zones.

Strengthening the activities of professional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide could also become an important part of efforts aimed at improving journalists' security in general. Such NGOs should continue to draw Governments' attention to the shortcomings of the existing physical and legal protections for media personnel. We believe that close cooperation between different governmental agencies and NGOs could provide a positive impetus, including revising the list of new areas of informational activity — for example in the blogosphere — where journalists would have the same rights as when they worked in conflict zones.

Ukraine believes that one of the most problematic aspects in protecting journalists in armed conflicts is not the absence of an international legal framework, but of specific implementation mechanisms. A case in point is the difficulty in bringing to account those responsible for acts of aggression against media representatives in conflict zones. In our view, it is also extremely important, at the level of the United Nations, to make a clear distinction between journalistic activity during armed conflicts and espionage. Unfortunately, in some States accusations of spying often serve as a legal basis to deny journalists access to conflict zones and as a reason for their illegal detention.

In that context, Ukraine is extremely alarmed by the current tendency of increasing media confrontation that could deepen the crisis of mutual confidence between States and affect some positive trends elaborated at the United Nations to protect the freedom of journalists and freedom of speech. We again stress the unacceptability of spreading manipulative and biased information, especially that obtained illegally, in order to achieve situational political benefits. Supporting and empowering journalists who are involved in covering events in conflict zones serves as an essential tool for a healthy and high-quality media environment in the world.

Ukraine strongly believes in the necessity of improving expertise aimed at upgrading the processes of investigation and making accountable those who inhibit the legitimate right of journalists to work in zones of instability.

Finally, we also pay tribute to journalists who have died or been injured when performing their professional duties. Our country will remain an active supporter of free and safe journalisms. We consider the United Nations and the Security Council instrumental actors in strengthening the basic rights and freedoms of journalists.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, oun your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We would also like to express our appreciation to the delegation of the United Kingdom, which competently led the work of the Council during the past month. We also wish to thank you, Sir, for your initiative in convening this debate. We are also grateful to Mr. Eliasson and to the journalists here today — Mr. Engel, Ms. Carroll, Mr. Abdinur and Mr. Abdul-Ahad — for their informative briefings.

As members are aware, this is not the first time that the Security Council has considered the issue of the protection of journalists. As the previous meeting on the subject was held under the Qatar's presidency during the month of December 2006 (see S/PV.5613), we are especially honoured to participate in today's meeting and to see other Member States participating as well.

Conflicting views as to what is taking place on the ground pose a major obstacle to the international community taking a positive role in resolving conflicts. That situation can be overcome only by the presence of professional, competent and qualified journalists who can convey the real story from the field. Although advances in technology and communication have enhanced the ability of individuals to communicate, the importance of journalists remains crucial to conveying the truth about situations, both in time of war and peace.

We deeply regret the fact that instances of the killing, imprisonment and abduction of journalists are rampant. In fact, they have increased during the past few years. Our region has had the largest share of such violations.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 45 journalists were killed during the past two years

in Syria alone. In addition, a large number of other journalists and media professionals have faced oppression, torture, arbitrary detention, intimidation and threats. The fact that the Syrian regime's security forces use draconian measures to suppress the freedom of information was one of the reasons for the popular uprising against that regime. In fact, that regime is still using its media as part of a campaign to mislead the world about what is taking place in Syria.

Journalists in occupied Palestine face similar serious violations, including acts of aggression by the Israeli occupation forces, all of which is being documented.

The State of Qatar has demonstrated its desire to strengthen the freedom of speech and the freedom to information, including enhancing its professionalism. We have done so based on our belief in the decisive role that information and media play in boosting knowledge and understanding in society and in fostering and entrenching those values as the cornerstone of civilization. The information sector can only perform its noble task if it is completely free and if journalists are allowed safe access to all areas, including zones of conflict.

In January 2012, the State of Qatar hosted an international conference on the theme of protecting journalists in dangerous situations, organized by the Qatari national committee for human rights, with a view to enhancing coordination and to uniting initiatives. The Doha Centre for Media Freedom has been making considerable and commendable efforts in training journalists on ways to secure their safety. This programme is named for Ali Hassan Al-Jaber, the famous Qatari photographer who was killed when covering the war in Libya in 2011.

Ensuring the protection of journalists is one of the priorities of those working to achieve peace and security throughout the world. However, we must also draw attention to such civilians working in zones of conflict, who are more vulnerable and more exposed to danger. Journalists reporing from conflict zones must act in total freedom. We also emphasize that occupation forces must respect the freedom of journalists. In order to secure their commitment to that freedom, there must be consequences for those who oppress journalists or create obstacles for them. We must not tolerate such actions. We must hold all those responsible accountable

We must look into the provisions that exist to ensure accountability for those who harm journalists. We should also consider how to give effect to article 79 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts. We reaffirm the provisions of resolution 1738 (2006), as well as the presidential statement of 12 February 2013 (S/PRST/2013/3), concerning the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. We hope to achieve the goals set in those documents.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this Security Council debate.

We have listened closely to a number of statements in the course of today's meeting that have served to enrich this debate on the aspects that cause journalists in armed conflict zones to be put in harm's way; the need to distinguish between journalists and activists; and the need to implement measures at the State level and within the international community to protect the lives of those individuals.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia of course endorses the language of resolution 1738 (2006), adopted in December 2012, indicating that journalists, media communications professionals and associated personnel carrying out dangerous professional activities within armed conflict zones should be considered as civilians and afforded respect and protection as such. Since the resolution was adopted, the safety of journalists in armed conflict has been a matter of concern for the Council and the entire United Nations.

Year after year, we learn that a growing number of media professionals have been killed. We have heard the Deputy Secretary-General state that 600 journalists have been killed in the past decade and that, in over 90 per cent of those cases, the perpetrators have gone unpunished.

In addition to highlighting the contributions made in today's debate, Bolivia would like to emphasize a few other points concerning the risks that journalists face and the situations that put them at risk. Clearly, one of those is increased war propaganda, which uses information as a further weapon in armed conflict.

I recall that two years ago, before the fall of the then-President of Libya, Al-Qadhafi, a number of international news networks were transmitting images of the arrival of the then-rebels in Tripoli's Green Square. Soon afterwards, we learned that it had all been staged, as if on a film set, and then broadcast by a number of television networks. That type of war propaganda — using journalism as an instrument — is also one of the factors putting the lives of journalists and media personnel at risk.

The second factor involves something mentioned today by the representative of Argentina, namely, the difficult, precarious working conditions in which many journalists are forced to carry out their tasks, putting their lives at risk. However, it also involves the economic interests behind the major global communications networks that, in many instances, are linked to one of the parties to a given armed conflict. Rather than being objective, neutral and impartial, they become a part of the conflict, distorting reality and thereby putting journalists at risk.

The third aspect I would like to mention in terms of danger to the lives of journalists has already been touched on by my colleagues from Brazil and Ecuador and relates to a decision made by the Common Market of the South that clearly condemns the massive surveillance discovered worldwide in recent weeks. Such espionage can also put journalists at risk, in that their sources might be exposed; while it also endangers their physical well-being and their work as journalists.

We fully agree with the need for the United Nations to work to develop institutional structures to ensure global governance of digital communication networks, which, unfortunately, at the moment, reside either in private hands or under the control of a handfull of States.

Addressing the protection of journalists surely involves the freedom of expression, which is recognized under international law and by the vast majority of the constitutions of the States Members of the United Nations. But beyond freedom of expression there is also freedom of the press, both of which concern journalists and media professionals. However, those freedoms also entail a fundamental counter-weight, which is the right of societies to communicate and to receive information. That right must therefore also be considered and protected.

Recent months have proved that the flow of information, which has revealed to the global public the existence of massive, systematic and broad-reaching spying networks, has exposed a situation that not only endangers journalists or those providing information, but that also threatens Heads of State members of the United Nations. The arrogance of some has reached such a level that it risks not only the lives of journalists, but beyond that, the life of a Head of State — as in the case of President Evo Morales Ayma. Some countries denied him the right to overfly their airspace, while others allowed him to do so on the condition that the presidential plane, which, as everyone knows, enjoys both immunity and inviolability, be inspected.

All of those issues are intimately related, forming part of the same design. In that sense, we believe that it is important, on the stage of the United Nations, to debate on equal footing those topics related to strengthening democracy, international governance and, indeed, the Organization itself.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Nduhuura (Uganda): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, focusing on protection of journalists. We are grateful for the first-hand insights in the briefings by media practitioners from the NBC News, the AP, the AFP and *The Guardian*.

Uganda welcomes the concerted efforts by the Security Council and various actors at the national, regional and international levels aimed at ensuring more effective protection for civilians in armed conflict. Nevertheless, the fact that civilians still account for the vast majority of casualties in such situations shows that a lot remains to be done.

While in many cases the warning signs of threats to civilians are detected in good time, they are often not acted upon promptly, due to a number of factors, including political sensitivities and lack of adequate capacity. We therefore underscore the necessity for redoubling collective action towards preventing conflicts, resolving them peacefully and protecting civilians, with national authorities and non-State actors bearing the primary responsibility. In that regard, the parties to armed conflict should fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law to ensure the protection of affected civilians.

Turning to the specific issue of the protection of journalists, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Protocols additional to the Conventions and other relevant instruments provide a solid foundation for the protection of civilians, including journalists, in situations of armed conflict. Article 79 of Additional Protocol I in particular provides that journalists are entitled to all the rights and protections afforded to civilians in armed conflicts.

The briefings we heard today put in sharp focus the dangers that journalists covering conflicts often face, including violent attacks, arrests, detention and, in extreme cases, death. Indeed, this issue deserves serious attention, given that, over the past 10 years, nearly to 1,000 journalists have lost their lives, including an estimated 121 killed in 2012.

We recognize the important role that journalists play in drawing the attention of the national, regional and international communities to the impact of conflict situations through their reports, which, in the digital age, can be received in real time. Many journalists carry out their responsibility with professionalism and objectivity. However, there have also been cases of journalists working with some media outlets whose reports appear to take positions that favour one side of a conflict, as well as incidents of others who engage in activities incompatible with their status, including espionage.

The work of journalists can be fraught with risks, especially if they report from one side of a conflict and are accused by the other of collaborating with the enemy. While embedded journalists may gain exclusive access to frontline reporting, they may also jeopardize their status as civilians.

It is therefore important to take into account all those and other factors vis-à-vis the role and responsibilities of journalists working in conflict situations in order to devise more effective strategies for their protection.

In conclusion, we welcome the adoption, in April 2012, of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, and look forward to its implementation in cooperation with Governments, media outlets, professional associations and other stakeholders. Those efforts, which complement resolution 1738 (2006), should be underpinned by enhanced awareness of and respect for existing international instruments and conventions, and with regard to emerging threats to journalists in conflict, especially those posed by non-State actors, and should be accompanied by practical guidance on the safety of journalists.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Eler (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this very timely debate.

It has been seven years since the adoption of the landmark resolution 1738 (2006), which identifies the issue of the protection of journalists in armed conflict as a matter of international peace and security. Unfortunately, recent statistics indicate that journalists and media workers in armed conflict continue to be killed, tortured, detained, targeted, wounded, harassed and kidnapped.

The stories, personal experiences and images brought to us by journalists from the frontlines serve to remind us all of the human consequences of conflict. They help us remember that protecting international peace and security is a crucially important task that affects the lives, livelihoods and future of millions of civilians suffering in war. Journalists help expose illegal and inhuman practices in conflicts and bring suffering and abuse to light. They help the international community by providing crucial facts in their effort to prevent conflict and influence world opinion.

The important and honourable work of journalists and media workers is often undertaken in the most dangerous circumstances. Their vital functions increase their vulnerability, and they are sometimes deliberately targeted for their reporting.

The most recent example is the Syrian crisis. Turkey, as a neighboring country, has become a hub hosting journalists on their way to cover the conflict in Syria, and does its best to help media workers conduct their professional duties and facilitate their passage to and from Syria. Turkey also does its utmost to grant access to journalists wishing to report on Syrian camps in Turkey, helping them acquire the necessary permission and providing them with informative briefings. Since 2011, 406 delegations of foreign journalists have been received in the public areas of the camps, where they have been allowed to film and conduct interviews. In addition, Turkey has extended a helping hand to domestic and foreign journalists who

have been kidnapped or wounded, most recently in Syria and Libya.

I would like to note that legal and administrative gaps persist in addressing the issue of the protection of journalists at the national and international levels, along with problems related to implementation and enforcement.

Turkey expresses its appreciation for all efforts undertaken by the United Nations and its agencies in this area and commends the Security Council for keeping the issue on its agenda. I would also like to take this opportunity to stress that a sustainable solution to the protection of civilians and journalists can be achieved only through conflict prevention. It is the duty and responsibility of the international community to act collectively and decisively to that end.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.